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The Castle of Hardayne.

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THE  
CASTLE  
OF  
HARDAYNE,  
A  
ROMANCE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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BY JOHN BIRD. *K Esq.*

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VOL. I.

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LIVERPOOL,

PRINTED BY J. M'CREERY,

AND SOLD BY MESSRS. C. AND G. KEARSLEY,  
FLEET-STREET, LONDON.

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1795.

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OF  
HARDAVINE  
A  
ROMANCE

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BY  
J. H. STODOLSKY

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CHAP. I.

Distracted in his mind,  
Forsook by heaven—forsaking human kind;  
Wide o'er the Aleian field he chose to stray,  
A long, forlorn, uncomfortable way.

POPE'S HOMER.

From the bleak summit of a wild  
chain of mountains, on which he had long  
wandered, Giraldus began to descend:  
the plain below exhibited nothing but  
dreary heath, and stretched in distance  
till it was lost in the lowering gloom.  
Deeply absorbed in painful reflection, he  
was heedless of the way, and the slightly  
beaten sheep-track alone, guided his un-  
conscious steps.

At

At length the near approach of night roused him from the deep reverie into which he had sunk: black and heavy clouds totally obscured the face of heaven, and the widely extended plain promised him no place of shelter or repose.

Often would fatigue tempt him to throw himself on the unfriendly heath, to rest his wearied limbs, and as often would the recollection of his unsheltered situation and the bleakness of the wind force him to exert himself, ere the threatening storm should commence. But tho' sorely oppressed with bodily fatigue, which a whole day's unceasing ramble had rendered extreme, yet was the anguish arising from mental cares still more severe—the remembrance of parting with all he held dear, would, with every attendant circumstance, rush on his mind, and for a time, obliterate all consciousness of present sufferings.

Time



Thus wandered the hopeless Giraldus, the victim of despair and grief, till the shades of night enveloped the dreary scene, and rendered the doubtful path too obscure to be traced. With uncertainty and hesitation he continued to pursue his painful journey; still no object presented itself to his strained sight, not a tree, not a shrub, all was dreary, dark, and comfortless. He listened—no sound caught his ear but the shrieking of the night raven; no light struck his eye, save the faint glimmering of an *Ignis Fatuus* that pointed out a marshy waste below.

The storm which had long been gathering, now suddenly burst upon him; the hail, driven by the furious blast, descended with violence, and the vivid lightning blazed around the dreary scene, while the quick succeeding thunder reverberated from the neighbouring mountains in awful hollow sounds.

“Surely,”

"Surely," said he, as he stood the  
 image of woe, "my savage relation  
 "could not behold me in this dreadful  
 "situation, without feeling some re-  
 "morse at having thus abandoned me :  
 "And thou, dearest Elvina ! how  
 "would thy tender bosom heave with  
 "sympathetic sorrow, didst thou but  
 "know the anguish I now feel. Yet  
 "why should I expect that she will  
 "still remember me, destitute and un-  
 "friended as I am—how can I hope  
 "to claim an interest in that heart,  
 "which thousands, the most opulent,  
 "would glory to obtain. Rather let  
 "me endeavour to act a part more  
 "consistent with my situation and her's,  
 "and, drowning all recollection of past  
 "scenes, endeavour only to acquire for-  
 "titude to look forward to that time,  
 "when, favoured by fortune, some hap-  
 "py rival, blessed with her enchant-  
 "ing smiles—but soft—that way leads  
 "to distraction, I must not pursue it."  
 "Here

"Here then" he cried, with a phrenzied voice, as he threw himself violently on the earth; "here, let me finish an existence, which heaven and earth seem to have conspired together to render miserable."

Overwhelmed and stupified with sorrow, he remained for some time in this position, till at length, aroused by a tremendous peal of thunder, he suddenly started up; the lightening had fired the heath at a short distance from him, and as his recollection returned, he stopped to view the grand though awful effect exhibited by it. The flame and sparks, whirled to an amazing height by the sudden gusts of wind; the total darkness of the night, only interrupted by the momentary flashes of lightening, and the dreary scene, partially illuminated by the blazing heath, altogether contributed to form a picture wildly sublime. By the light which it afforded, he could  
for

for some time discern his way; he went forward, till distance once more involved it in total obscurity, and chance only directed his uncertain steps; suddenly he found himself among what appeared to be the ruins of an extensive edifice. Two high turrets that frowned with deeper gloom on the darkness of the night, directed his way to a large gateway, and with cautious steps he slowly passed on to an inner court. A flash of lightening, which now shot athwart the gloom, yielded a transient view of the desolation that reigned throughout the extensive area. Some buildings on the east side, and the end opposite to him, appeared most entire, though nearly overgrown with moss and ivy; the rest exhibited nothing but an immense pile of ruins. To the former therefore he bent his course, resolving there to take up his abode for the night. The frequent piles of rubbish, intermixed with weeds and close woven brambles, greatly impeded his progress, while



while the owls and daws, alarmed at the unusual intrusion, flew round the court with mournful and incessant screams, and seemed to indicate the entire desertion of the place by every human being.

He now entered an extensive hall, and was struck with the awful gloom and silence that prevailed; he crossed to a door, which he could just perceive on the opposite side, it opened to a passage narrow and totally dark; fear of uncovered vaults made him tread with slow and cautious steps, and though the sorrow which overwhelmed his heart, almost obliterated every apprehension of personal danger; yet he began to feel a secret horror stealing over his mind, and impressing it with a superstitious dread, which the lonely desolation of the place seemed formed for inspiring. He now passed through an extensive range of rooms; in most of them an air of grandeur prevailed; but the windows broken and dismantled

mantled, left them entirely exposed to the driving storm. At length he came to an inner apartment that seemed more habitable than those he had passed, and here he determined to stop; feeling round the room, which he found was wainscotted, he came to a corner where some loose boards lay; he took some of these to stop the entrance, through which the wind blew extremely bleak, and then returning, laid himself quietly down on the remainder.

Anxiety, over fatigue, and the hardness of his bed, kept him for some time awake, but he was just sinking into a state of insensibility, when he was roused by a slight noise—he lifted up his head and beheld something that gave a glittering light in an opposite corner; as he eagerly gazed at it, he thought he saw the figure of a man, though faintly and imperfectly shadowed out; he started in terror and surprise, immediately arose, and

and drawing his sword, advanced to the corner where he had beheld it : but notwithstanding his quickness, it had disappeared in the instant, and no visible means of its entrance or retreat could be discovered. Giraldus looked wildly round for something that might remove or confirm the terrors, which spite of reason, arose in his mind ; the boards he had placed at the door remained in the same position, and he felt himself utterly at a loss to account for its escape. In fearful expectation he paced the room for some time, but every thing remained quiet as before ; he went to the window to try if he could discern any object, but though the storm had ceased, all was buried in profound darkness. He now began to think he must have been mistaken, and that the appearance was only one of those illusions of fancy that the disturbed imagination will at times seem to represent ; the thought somewhat satisfied him, he endeavoured to calm his perturbed

turbed mind, and removing some of the boards to form a more commodious bed, he again laid himself gently down. Fatigue at length overcame the terrors and doubts which would frequently arise, and he once more was sinking into a state of insensibility, when a deep and hollow groan, that seemed to proceed from a place immediately under him, made him give a violent and involuntary start, when instantly the board on which he lay snapt in two, and he fell through the opening.

Stunned by the fall, Giraldus remained for some time insensible; and returning recollection opened with such complicated wretchedness, that eternal insensibility seemed preferable. He however rose to feel the nature of the place into which he had fallen, for not the faintest gleam of light could he observe to lend its friendly aid. Advancing one step, his foot struck against something—he stooped down, but his blood chilled with hor-

ror,



ror, when his extended hand rested on the cheek of a man, who seemed, by the yet trickling blood, to have been recently murdered and thrown into this place.

There is a point in affliction, at which when the human mind arrives, seared by a train of continued misfortunes, it grows incapable of feeling more, and with a calmness borrowed from despair, awaits in torpid apathy the worst that may ensue.

Such was the state of Giraldus while he stood musing over the body;—he ran over the misfortunes of this eventful day, and his situation now appeared quite hopeless—fallen, he doubted not, into some deep well, whence, from the lonely situation of the castle, it was probable no person might ever arrive to free him; there famishing through want, and doomed to wear out the lingering remains of life under every circumstance of wretchedness,

edness, with the bloody and mangled object that lay before him. Yet while these dreadful ideas passed through his imagination, he felt no pain;—a gloomy calmness took possession of his mind, and he resigned himself to his fate without a sigh or murmur.

He involuntarily shuddered while he again stooped to try if any life yet remained in the miserable object—his arm was cold as death; but on opening his waistcoat, and applying his hand to the breast, he felt the heart still vibrate, though the pulsation was so slight and irregular, that the springs of life seemed verging to their lowest ebb.

Overjoyed at the discovery of even the little that remained, he instantly began to apply such remedies as his situation would admit of. A deep wound on the side of the head appeared to be the principal; to this therefore he applied his handkerchief,

handkerchief, as a bandage, to prevent the unhappy sufferer's bleeding to death before any further assistance could be given him; then, as gently as possible he raised him up, and laid him on some of the boards that had fallen. The motion seemed to revive the stranger from his fainting; he gave a deep groan, and Giralduſ felt extremely happy at this ſymptom of returning life. "If," ſaid he, "my miſfortunes can be made the means of ſaving the life of a human being, left with all theſe marks of cruelty to die in this miſerable place, I ſhall bleſs the hand of providence, that by ſuch a train of uncommon events hath guided me hither."

The more he dwelt on theſe events, ſo much the more did every circumſtance ſeem to conſpire to render him the inſtrument of preſervation to the unfortunate ſtranger.

Sometimes

Sometimes he felt inclined to suppose that the appearance he had seen above, was some way connected with this bloody transaction; it might probably be the perpetrator himself, who had been led by remorse to see if life still remained in the miserable victim, but the manner of his entrance or exit, was to him wholly unknown and inexplicable. Several circumstances led him to imagine that the castle was inhabited, though from the specimen he had already seen, it could only be the refuge of banditti; and yet a single person, wandering at the hour of midnight through these dreary apartments, did not seem altogether to accord with the manners of such ferocious beings, hardened by custom to every scene of cruelty and bloodshed.

Thus, in unsatisfactory conjectures did Giraldus wear away the remains of a long and tedious night, in which the death-like



death-like silence was only interrupted by the deep groans of the wounded man.

At length the day broke, and never did its returning light bring more joy to the heart of the benighted and lost traveller, wandering on the brink of some unseen precipice, than it did to that of Giraldus; who, while he anxiously traced its progressive increase, felt his heart dilate with gratitude for a blessing, of which, 'till then, he had never known the full value.

When the light grew sufficiently strong, he perceived his companion was a young man of a very genteel form; his countenance appeared interesting, though overspread with the paleness of death; his dress denoted him to be a person of rank, but the blood which flowed down it had almost obliterated its former colour. Giraldus now set himself to examine the nature of his wounds, and found

found, that though he had several, none appeared dangerous, except that on his head, which, from the violence of the contusion, seemed to have been given with a bludgeon, and had been the means of depriving him of his senses.

After binding them up with all possible care, he began to survey the place into which he had fallen, and discovered it to be, as he had before conjectured, an old well, choaked, and partly filled with rubbish, though still of a considerable depth from the floor.

While he stood contriving means to extricate himself, he perceived an opening on one side about half way up, that seemed large enough to admit him; as he did not doubt his being able to attain to that height, he immediately set himself to work with additional spirit, by pulling out the looser stones, and placing two pieces of board alternately in the crevices,  
he

he at length contrived, with great difficulty, to work himself up to the aperture, this he perceived was an old drain, and sufficiently large to admit him on his hands and knees; as he thought it probable it might open into some part of the castle, he made no scruple at entering it, but had not proceeded far, ere he found himself obliged to return, the stagnated air having almost suffocated him; as he crawled back to regain the entrance, he perceived another branch on his right hand; this he followed, and after a variety of turnings, to his inexpressible joy, it at length opened into the vaults of the castle, and from these he quickly made his way to the upper court.

The happiness which Giraldus felt at his deliverance was much allayed by the recollection of the situation in which he had left his companion; without stopping therefore to view the buildings, he directly

rectly hurried away to procure such assistance as would extricate him from it. When he passed the gateway, the only habitation which appeared in view was a lonely beacon, situated on an abrupt and rocky promontory, which jutted out from between two of the neighbouring mountains, and to this he accordingly hastened with all the speed he could exert.

The peasant who attended the beacon, with his wife, were at breakfast, when Giraldus arrived; without preface he briefly related to him the situation in which he had left the young man, and begged his immediate assistance; the peasant heard him in silence, mixed with curiosity and wonder, and Giraldus repeated his request—"why master," said he; "if you was at the castle last night, you may go down on your knees and thank god if you ever got out again alive; why there's nothing but devils, and robbers, and screech owls, and them kind of things, that



"that lives there, and then there has  
 "been such strange things seen and  
 "heard, that it has frightened all the  
 "people about here out of their wits;  
 "for my part I don't care to go within  
 "a mile of it—sit down a bit and I'll tell  
 "you a story about it: You must know,  
 "Tom Brown, who lives at the next  
 "village"—"prithee" said Giraldu, in-  
 "terrupting him, "do not trifle friend,  
 "with these silly tales, consider, while  
 "you are talking here, the poor young  
 "man is bleeding to death." He  
 then, in the most pathetic manner, de-  
 scribed the miserable circumstances in  
 which he had been left, and concluded  
 with observing, that should they now  
 omit to use every possible means in their  
 power for his preservation, by suffering  
 ideal terrors to get the better of their hu-  
 manity, they would in fact, have nearly  
 as much to answer for, as if they had  
 been previously concerned in the murder.

This

This last argument seemed to have more weight with the peasant than any of the rest, he scratched his head however, and appeared meditating a reply, but his wife, more perfectly convinced, seconded the solicitations of Giraldus with her commands, and he at length consented to go, though evidently with great reluctance, muttering indistinctly the words, fool-hardy, and Tom Brown. He now went out to fetch his son, a stout young man, who was cutting heath at a small distance, and thus reinforced, they immediately, after providing all things necessary, set out to the castle.

As they approached the gateway, the countenances of both father and son became evidently impressed with the symptoms of terror, and Giraldus greatly feared they would desert him at last. When they arrived at the mouth of the well, their agitation increased, and at the proposal of descending into it, they both  
turned

turned pale as ashes, but he quickly set aside their fears on this head, by informing them that he meant to descend alone by means of the ropes which they had brought with them; to this they did not seem to object, but immediately lent their aid to lower him down.

On coming to the bottom he found the young man nearly in the same state in which he had been left, pale and quite insensible. Having, with all the tenderness in his power fixed the ropes, he gave the peasants directions to draw him slowly and carefully up—they obeyed, till having drawn him near the surface, the ghastly and bloody object which presented itself to their view, had such an effect upon them, that they both gave a sudden scream, and stood in momentary suspense, whether they should draw him up or let him down again. Giraldus feared the latter, and, in the utmost anxiety, lest they should thus dash all his hopes

to

to the ground, loudly denounced vengeance against them if they did not instantly draw him up. The menace brought them to their senses, they immediately proceeded, and having laid the wounded man carefully on the floor, they again let fall the rope, and Giraldus, fixing it upon himself, was quickly drawn up.

At the recollection of what he had seen in this room on the preceding evening, he looked carefully around, but every thing only conspired to increase his surprise. The boards had remained at the door as he himself had placed them, and the windows were so situated, that no person could have made his escape through them without being perceived by him, it seemed most probable therefore, that there was some private door in the wainscot; but as this was not a proper time for examination, he determined to take an early opportunity of investigating it alone. Having therefore placed the wounded  
man



man in an arm chair, which they had brought with them for the purpose, and each assisting, they immediately set off for the beacon, to the no small joy of the peasants, who had been so much terrified, that they scarcely dared to breathe, during the whole time they had remained at the castle.

## CHAP.

## CHAP. II.

This is the man should do the bloody deed.

SHAKESPEARE.

---

IN proportion as the distance of the castle increased, did the courage of the peasants return. The old man who had been hitherto silent, now seemed anxious to communicate some of the wonderful tales he had heard related of the castle, though from the apparant incredulity of Giraldus, he scarcely knew how to introduce the subject. After several attempts

tempts, he thus began—" Poor young  
 " man how pale he looks, it would have  
 " been a pity indeed to let him die in that  
 " horrid place; but if he had," continued  
 he, with a countenance in which faith and  
 dread of ridicule were whimsically asso-  
 ciated, " do you think he would have  
 " walked afterwards." " No," replied  
 Giraldu, smiling, " I think it most pro-  
 " bable he would not."

" Every man to his own opinion,"  
 said the peasant, somewhat piqued at  
 hearing what he thought a serious affair,  
 treated so lightly, " If he would not,  
 " others have, and do yet, mayhap you  
 " don't believe that: no more did Tom  
 " Brown, he used to say, a fiddle for all  
 " the ghosts in Christendom, it was all  
 " a foolish notion, and there was no such  
 " thing, and such like; but egad Tom  
 " won't say so now." " And what,"  
 said Giraldu, " induced him to alter his  
 " opinion?"—" That," said the peasant,

“ is what I am going to tell you, if you  
 “ will be patient. Why you must know,  
 “ as I was a saying, Tom was the boldest  
 “ man in the village, so he went to a fair  
 “ about four miles off, there he got a  
 “ little drink, and then nothing would  
 “ serve him but he must go home by the  
 “ castle, because forsooth it was the  
 “ nearest way; he might have had com-  
 “ pany enough if he would have gone  
 “ the other road, and it was only two  
 “ miles further, but Tom was fool-hardy.  
 “ I never knew one that got any good by  
 “ fool-hardiness,” continued the peasant,  
 looking earnestly at Giraldus, who nod-  
 ding assent, he went on.

“ So when he came to the castle gate,  
 “ the devil put it into his head to take  
 “ up a stone, and throw it as hard as he  
 “ could against the wall, to shew that he  
 “ did not value the place a fig; and with  
 “ that down comes a whole shoal of owls  
 “ and jackdaws about his ears, and at  
 “ that



“ that instant he saw something like a  
 “ man, all in black on the other side of  
 “ the court. Tom fancies it gave a leap  
 “ to the place where he stood, for he di-  
 “ rectly felt something give him a slap  
 “ on the shoulder; he did not wait to  
 “ see what it was, but ran away as fast  
 “ as his legs could carry him, and the  
 “ faster he ran the more the thing kept  
 “ slapping him on the back : at last he  
 “ grew so faint that he was determined  
 “ to turn round and face it, let it be  
 “ what it would; so when he turned  
 “ round he saw nothing, and by that  
 “ Tom knew it must be the devil, and  
 “ nobody else—God bless us—and so  
 “ he ran again, faster than before, till  
 “ he got home.

“ He looked so wild that his wife  
 “ thought he had been mad, and asked  
 “ him what in the name of God ailed  
 “ him, and what he had got on his back.  
 “ I don’t know said Tom, dropping

“ down on the floor almost breathless ;  
 “ I believe it is the devil. Some of the  
 “ neighbours who were there, and pre-  
 “ tended to be wiser than any body else,  
 “ said it was nothing in the world but a  
 “ young owl that had fixed its claws so  
 “ fast in his jacket, that it could not get  
 “ loose again.—But all the world shan’t  
 “ make me believe that it was any thing  
 “ but a young devil ; for as soon as it  
 “ got loose, it flew directly into the mid-  
 “ dle of a large fire, and was never heard  
 “ nor seen again.

“ Mercy on us,” continued the pea-  
 sant, terrified at his own tale, “ I would  
 “ not venture to sleep at that place, or  
 “ even go near it in the night, if they  
 “ would make me master of the castle  
 “ for my pains.”

By this time they had arrived at the  
 beacon, and Giraldus immediately dis-  
 patched the peasant’s son for a surgeon ;  
 who,

who, as he dwelt at the distance of five miles, did not arrive till late in the afternoon.

Having examined his patient, and been informed of the state in which he was found, he observed, that under such circumstances it was next to a miracle he yet remained alive ; but at the same time declared his chief danger proceeded from the great loss of blood which he had sustained, as he apprehended no very bad consequences from the contusion on his head, and that was by far the worst wound.

After giving proper directions respecting his treatment he took his leave, with a promise of returning early on the following morning.

The young gentleman passed so good a night, that when the surgeon arrived, he found him far better than he expected,

but his languor and weakness were still extreme; he therefore desired he might be kept as quiet as possible, and no person suffered to talk with him, if he should seem inclined. This Giraldus promised, and then entered into conversation with him respecting the castle.

From him he learned, that it was now considered as the temporary station of a party of banditti, who frequently committed depredations throughout the whole county, and who had hitherto eluded every effort to bring them to justice.

“ The history of its former possessors, or why it has thus been totally abandoned,” said he, “ are circumstances, that I, who have lived near six years in this neighbourhood, have never been able to discriminate from the mass of absurd and nonsensical tales, with which the superstitious villagers answer all inquiries. All that I have been able to learn,”  
continued



continued he, "is, that it is now near  
 " twenty years since it was inhabited,  
 " and that it was called the Castle of  
 " Hardayne."

Giraldus thanked him for the information, and immediately proceeded to the castle, fully determined to find out, if possible, whether the person he had seen, was one of the banditti, who had lingered behind after his companions were gone, or if he yet remained an inhabitant of the castle.

The buildings had an ancient and grand appearance, the gateway was in the richest stile of Gothick architecture, very large, and opening immediately to the great court; round this a Gothick arcade with a terrace had formerly ran, but it was now so much ruined, that it was difficult to trace out the original design. The shattered walls were stained with a variety of beautiful mosses, or shadowed

with the broad masses of ivy, through which the grey tint of Gothick ornaments would sometimes peep, and give a pleasing relief to the deep green shades. The court was very extensive, but almost entirely overgrown with weeds and brambles, and the remains of an equestrian statue on a pedestal, stood in the center.

Of the eastern side, into which he now entered, some of the apartments seemed to have been very magnificent, and others bore evident traces of fire, a gloomy solemnity reigned throughout them, which the ivy and shrubs, that deeply shaded the windows, contributed to heighten. At length he came to the room in which he had taken up his abode on the night of his arrival, and commenced a diligent and strict search for the private door; but in vain he tried every crevice, in vain he sounded every pannel, not the least trace of any such door could he find. He then observed the windows  
and

and door again, but the more he considered them, the more he was convinced there must have been some other way for the person to escape, or otherwise, that it was a supernatural being who had appeared to him. This he was very unwilling to grant, and therefore renewed his search with even more circumspection than before; all his endeavours however proved fruitless, and with great reluctance he at length relinquished his design.

As he was determined not to leave the young gentleman until he should have gained sufficient strength to be removed, and as that might probably take some time, it now struck him that he might appropriate a part of each day that he remained at the beacon, to this pursuit, and by concealing himself in an obscure part of the ruins, watch if any person came in or went out; for it was evident, was any person concealed, he must at

times emerge from that concealment, were it only for provisions.

Fully satisfied with this scheme, he returned to the court, and as the evening was approaching he walked slowly towards the gateway; when suddenly turning his head, he beheld a man glide swiftly along amongst the ruins of the arcade in the corner of the wing which he had just left.

Elated with this discovery, which bid fair to terminate the adventure at once, he instantly pursued with such expedition, as again to catch a glimpse of him as he entered a dark passage. Giraldus continued to follow, and soon found himself at the staircase that descended into the vaults; while he made his way down this with all the haste the nature of the place would admit of, a door below was shut with violence, the hollow echoes resounded through the distant vaults—he paused



paused a few moments—but the hopes of compleating his discovery impelled him forward, he again descended, and soon found himself at the door which had startled him so much; he endeavoured to force it open, but all his efforts were ineffectual, it seemed strongly fastened on the inside; and after many successful struggles, he quitted it in despair, and returned the way he came.

The sun had now descended to the verge of the horizon, and the lingering rays rested on the tufted ivy and Gothick spires of the gateway, the brilliant illumination of these parts were finely contrasted by the gloom that overspread the court below; Giraldus stood some time admiring the grandeur of the scene, till the splendid tints gradually died away, and the solemn deepening gloom warned him it was time to depart.

He now quitted the castle, and slowly  
returned

returned towards the beacon, absorbed in a variety of conjectures on the cause of all this secrecy and mystery. As it was hardly probable he could obtain the assistance of the peasants, he sometimes thought of procuring some instrument to force open the door; but when he reflected on the imprudence of such an action, that he should thus, in the darkness of the vaults expose himself to the unseen dagger of a person who must have some weighty motive for such strict concealment, he abandoned the idea, and determined to follow the method he had first thought of, to hide himself among the ruins, till he should have an opportunity of more particularly observing the manners of this person when unconscious of being seen; and by those he imagined he might be enabled to form, at least, a better idea of the reasons for his thus shutting himself up from society.

He found the peasants at his return extremely

tremely uneasy, they had observed him take his course towards the castle in the morning, and they feared by his long stay some ill had befallen him, they therefore welcomed him back with unfeigned joy, and crowded round him to know what he had seen.

“O sir!” cried the old man, “we have been so much alarmed at your long stay; why will you go to that cursed place? you should consider if any harm was to happen to you, there is none of our people dare to go and look for you;” he then gave him a short lecture on prudence and fool-hardiness, and concluded with hoping he had satisfied his curiosity, and would go there no more.

Giraldus smiled, “I thank you my good friend,” said he, “for the kind concern you express for my welfare, but believe me, there is nothing in the  
“ castle

"castle to hurt either you or me," he then inquired how the young gentleman was, and had the satisfaction to hear that he was much better. "He wanted sadly "to speak to my mistress this afternoon," said the peasant, "but she told him she "would not hear him, for the doctor had "ordered him to be kept quiet," "she "did well," said Giraldu, "do you "know whether he is awake now," they answered he was, and he took the candle and went softly into the room.

The stranger turned his head as he entered, "O sir!" said he, in a faint voice, "will you inform me where I am, "and how I came hither, for I am quite "unable to form the least idea, all late "events appear to me like a dream, and "the woman who attends me will give "me no information."

"As to the first," replied Giraldu, "be assured you are now in the hands "of



“ of persons who will treat you with  
 “ their greatest care and attention, for the  
 “ other, I can in part, best explain it to  
 “ you, the rest we can have from your-  
 “ self only ; but as it is absolutely neces-  
 “ sary you should be kept quiet for some  
 “ time, I cannot give you the informa-  
 “ tion you wish at present, we must wait  
 “ till you are sufficiently recovered ; in  
 “ the mean time all I wish to be informed  
 “ of is, whether you have any friends  
 “ near, to whom we could send advice  
 “ of your safety, lest they should be un-  
 “ der apprehensions at your absence.”

“ My name,” replied the young gen-  
 tleman, “ is Albert, I am the son of the  
 “ Earl of Glenderwen, who resides at the  
 “ castle of Melbourne, about fifty miles  
 “ from hence ; that is, if I am near the  
 “ place where I was attacked and wound-  
 “ ed : and if you can dispatch any per-  
 “ son to inform him of my present situa-  
 “ tion,

“ tion, you will greatly oblige both him  
 “ and me.”

“ I will take care,” said Giraldus,  
 “ that a person shall be sent off early to-  
 “ morrow morning, and I must now re-  
 “ quest in return, that you keep as still  
 “ as possible, it being very essential to  
 “ your speedy recovery,” he then wished  
 him a good night and retired to take  
 some refreshment, of which he stood in  
 great need, having fasted since the morn-  
 ing.

The next day he dispatched the pea-  
 sant's son with a short note to the castle  
 of Melbourne, and soon after the surge-  
 on arrived, who after examining his pati-  
 ent, pronounced him, unless some un-  
 foreseen circumstance should occur, en-  
 tirely out of danger.

Giraldus felt great joy at this intelli-  
 gence, and as soon as the surgeon was  
 gone,

gone, he once more walked towards the castle, resolving to put in execution the scheme of the preceeding day.

The morning was gloomy and lowering, and an unusual dejection of spirits came over him as he entered the gateway, to this he gave no heed, further than attributing it to the dulness of the weather. Having stationed himself among the ruins on the opposite side of the court to that where he had seen the man on the last evening, he waited some time with great patience, but nobody appeared. As his situation was quite concealed so that he might see and not be seen, he doubted not but that the event would fully repay him for his trouble.

The hopes of discovering the cause of a seclusion hitherto so inexplicable, which must have something very extraordinary, probably very bad, for its foundation; and perhaps the person who had been concerned

concerned in wounding Lord Albert; particularly the latter, was sufficient to induce him to continue his watching for a considerable length of time, during which no circumstance occurred to favour his views.

He had insensibly sunk into a deep reverie on this subject, when he was suddenly roused by a slight noise; turning his head, he beheld to his great amazement, a man with a drawn sword almost close to him; his countenance bore such traces of villany, that it was impossible to mistake his design; he flew towards Giraldus, who with great difficulty parried his first blow, which wounded him slightly in the arm.—The assassin pressed on, and aimed a furious stroke, which had it taken effect must instantly have decided the contest, but Giraldus stepping quickly aside, evaded the blow, and before the other could recover himself, returned it with a deep and deadly wound in his breast;



breast; immediately the blood forsook his cheeks, and rushed in a torrent from his wound, he staggered a few paces, and fell.

“ Oh! cursed fate,” he exclaimed,  
 “ thus have I been ever made the instru-  
 “ ment of others crimes, and thus am I  
 “ rewarded; vengeance has overtaken  
 “ me at last, and by the hands of him  
 “ whom I have most injured; fly this  
 “ castle,” cried he, in a voice scarcely  
 human, “ fly this country, other daggers  
 “ are pointed to thy breast, some may  
 “ succeed though mine has failed. Be-  
 “ ware—does the blood drop from thine  
 “ arm? ’tis not the first of thine that  
 “ has stained these stones. Oh! could  
 “ I expiate by revealing all, but even  
 “ that I feel is now too late—mark me—  
 “ beneath yon pedestal a scene, a bloody  
 “ scene.” He would have proceeded but  
 his voice became inarticulate and soon  
 died away, a convulsive shuddering now  
 seized

seized him, a ghastly horror overspread his countenance, and with a deep groan he expired.

Giraldus turned from the dismal object, and immediately quitted the castle where prudence forbade his longer stay, his mind was in such a state of confusion that he doubted whether the circumstances to which he had so lately been witness were real, the whole transaction had been so sudden, and unexpected, the work of a few moments only, that it seemed far more like the effect of a vision, than a reality.

With difficulty he collected his scattered thoughts to dwell on this extraordinary event, the recollection of the words of the dying man involved him in a labyrinth of mystery, from which he found it impossible to extricate himself. From them it appeared, that some person pursued his life with the most mortal hatred,

hatred, but unconscious of having given offence to any one, he racked his memory without effect, and his mind with fruitless conjectures. Why a man of power and consequence, for such, the emissaries he employed proved him to be, should thus pursue one utterly destitute of either and almost friendless, appeared equally difficult to solve, but when to these he added the horrid intelligence, which the man had partly communicated, of the bloody scene that had been performed there, on some person so nearly allied to him that the expression of "your blood" had been adopted, he was at once convinced he had been mistaken for some other person.

This conviction no sooner flashed on his mind, than he made an application of all the circumstances to Lord Albert, and thought it beyond a probability from the little he knew of his story, and from the former attempt that had been made on  
his

his life, that he, and he only, was the devoted man.

At all events he determined to inform him of every circumstance the first opportunity, and as the surgeon would be there the next morning, then, he conceived, would be the most proper time, when they might concert such measures for his safety as should baffle every attempt to surprize him, till the return of the messenger from the castle of Melbourne.

CHAP.



### CHAP. III.

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Our youth is like the dream of the hunter on the heath; he sleeps in the mild beam of the sun, but awakes amidst a storm; the red lightning flies around, and the trees shake their heads to the wind. He looks back with joy to the day of the sun, and the pleasant dreams of his rest.

POEMS OF OSSIAN.

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GIRALDUS passed an uneasy night, in vain he courted sleep to his wearied eyelids, the images of the preceding day haunted his mind, and roused him from momentary slumbers.

Convinced

Convinced that his own story was totally inadequate to explain this mystery, his imagination formed a thousand conjectures in regard to Lord Albert, for whose safety he now felt the most anxious solicitude, a solicitude heightened by the satisfaction he had already felt in having been so instrumental in his preservation.

When the surgeon arrived the next morning, Giraldus called him aside, and after informing him of the events of the preceding day, solicited his advice how to act in a situation of such moment.

The sentiments of the surgeon accorded with his, he saw the probability of the young gentleman's being the intended victim, and thought it would be highly improper to neglect making him immediately acquainted with all the circumstances, that they might together frame such measures as should effectually screen him

him from any similar attempt. As soon, therefore, as the surgeon had examined his patient's wounds, Giraldus seated himself at his bedside, and proceeded to lay before him the circumstances he had so lately witnessed, relating his providential guidance to the castle for shelter, his having taken up his abode in the room over the well, and the subsequent events till he was conveyed to the beacon. He then informed him of his visits to the castle, and the consequences of the last, and concluded with hinting his apprehensions, that he, Lord Albert, was the person thus singled out for assassination.

The young gentleman heard these circumstances with the greatest surprise, he expressed the most unbounded gratitude to Giraldus for his timely exertions, and lamented, how inadequate all he could offer, was to express his sense of the obligation; at the same time he assured them, it was impossible he could be the

person aimed at, notwithstanding the circumstances in which he had been found at the castle, whereon they had particularly dwelt.

“ That affair,” said he, “ I can sufficiently explain to you. Early on that morning I left the house of a friend, with whom I had been on a visit; the evening was approaching when I entered the heath, and the black lowering clouds seemed to threaten a heavy storm; I just then recollected some things of consequence which I had left at a small village where I dined, and immediately dispatched my servant for them, with strict injunctions to exert all his speed, and endeavour to overtake me, while I went slowly forward.

“ As I approached the castle its magnificence caught my attention, and I remained for some time contemplating  
“ its



" its desolated grandeur; when on a  
 " sudden, a number of armed men rush-  
 " ed from among the ruins and sur-  
 " rounded me. I knew them to be a  
 " party of banditti, who had made fre-  
 " quent and great depredations round  
 " the adjacent country, often committing  
 " acts of the most ferocious barbarity,  
 " and seldom sparing the lives of those  
 " who were so unfortunate as to fall into  
 " their hands; I had no alternative but  
 " either to submit to their mercy, or  
 " endeavour to break my way through  
 " them; determined on the latter, I spur-  
 " red my horse violently, and with my  
 " sword nearly severed the arm of him  
 " who had seized my bridle, but was in-  
 " stantly felled to the ground by a blow  
 " from behind, which deprived me of all  
 " sensation, and blotted out the know-  
 " ledge of every subsequent transaction."

" Thus you may clearly perceive, that  
 " this casual incident can by no means  
 C 2 " explain,

“ explain, what must have been the re-  
 “ sult of long premeditated villany; and  
 “ every other of my life would be still  
 “ less capable of solving this mystery.  
 “ But while I am thus endeavouring to  
 “ convince you, how groundless your  
 “ fears, in regard to me, have been; I  
 “ cannot, on my part, help feeling the  
 “ most serious apprehensions for the  
 “ safety of one to whom I am so greatly  
 “ indebted. I must therefore intreat  
 “ you to be cautious; I much fear from  
 “ the confident manner in which the  
 “ man spoke, he was not mistaken.  
 “ Believe me, my dear friend,” he conti-  
 “ nued, “ the request does not proceed  
 “ from curiosity, when I beg, if the obli-  
 “ gation is not too great to add to those  
 “ I am already under, you would favour  
 “ me with a recital of your history; the  
 “ events by which you were through Pro-  
 “ vidence directed to the castle for my  
 “ preservation, must surely have some-  
 “ thing remarkable in them, and perhaps  
 “ some

“ some circumstance which has at present escaped your memory, may be brought back to your recollection, and tend to throw some light on the late mysterious transaction.”

“ I am very willing,” replied Giraldus, “ to recite to you the chief events of my life, though I much fear they will prove as uninteresting as I am sure they will, inadequate to explain that affair.”

‘ The satisfaction and comforts which are derived from the affectionate solicitude of a parent, I was doomed never to feel, mine were both snatched away ere I had sense to discern their kindness, or regret their loss. My father, who was engaged in some mercantile concerns, had occasion to cross the seas to a distant country; I was deemed too young to undertake the voyage, and my mother, who accompanied my father, was, with great difficulty, at length persuaded

ed to leave me behind in the care of an  
uncle, who had an independant though  
small fortune.

In that fatal voyage I lost the tenderest of parents; it was supposed the ship had foundered at sea, as no tidings of her ever reached England. This information I received from my uncle many years after the event.

It would be tedious and unnecessary, to infringe on your time with a recital of the trivial events of childhood; yet, dear and ever to be regretted days, when youthful innocence knew no care, no thought of the morrow, no retrospect of the past, no melancholy anticipation of the future, had power to embitter the happy tranquillity of the moment; all was calm unruffled serenity, like the peaceful bosom of the lake when every rude breeze is hushed to repose.

My



' My uncle, ever of a morose dispo-  
 ' sition, was the only alloy to that hap-  
 ' piness; cruel, selfish, and sordid, ab-  
 ' jectly fawning to his superiors, haughty  
 ' and overbearing to his inferiors and de-  
 ' pendants, his disposition seemed an as-  
 ' semblage of all that a generous heart  
 ' must abhor. But let me draw a veil  
 ' over the frailties of a relation, whose  
 ' conduct, if I cannot palliate I ought  
 ' perhaps to conceal, and strive to forget  
 ' what I cannot justify.

' In the neighbourhood of our habita-  
 ' tion dwelt a baron, a gentleman of con-  
 ' siderable fortune; he had a son and  
 ' daughter nearly of my age; and during  
 ' the years of childhood, my visits to my  
 ' young companions at the castle were al-  
 ' most daily. As we advanced in age,  
 ' that friendship which had dawned in  
 ' infancy became expanded and ardent;  
 ' in every pursuit and pleasure Henry was  
 ' my constant companion, and when our

‘ sports were of a nature, that the delicacy  
 ‘ of her sex did not prevent her partici-  
 ‘ pating, his sister Elvina would ever  
 ‘ make one of the party.

‘ I will not attempt to describe this lady  
 ‘ to you, my powers of description are  
 ‘ totally inadequate to give you even a  
 ‘ faint idea of her perfections, suffice it  
 ‘ to say, the beauties of her person were  
 ‘ only equalled by the angelic sweetness of  
 ‘ her disposition. Surely I cannot de-  
 ‘ serve censure if I did not remain insen-  
 ‘ sible to so many charms; I loved her  
 ‘ with a degree of fervency, little short of  
 ‘ adoration, and my youthful heart, un-  
 ‘ conscious of the ways of the world, was  
 ‘ lost ere I dreamed of impropriety.

‘ But when experience had taught me  
 ‘ to consider the insuperable distance for-  
 ‘ tune had placed between us, I shudder-  
 ‘ ed with horror at the situation of my  
 ‘ heart; reason pointed to the only re-  
 ‘ source,

‘ source, and I at length determined, if  
 ‘ possible, to obliterate her image from  
 ‘ my heart.

‘ This triumph of reason over passion  
 ‘ was not obtained without a very severe  
 ‘ struggle, it was an exertion that was not  
 ‘ unattended with moments of the bit-  
 ‘ terest anguish. Yet, when all circum-  
 ‘ stances were considered, I found the  
 ‘ sacrifice had far more of necessity than  
 ‘ merit in it ; if even I could flatter my-  
 ‘ self with a small portion of her regard,  
 ‘ if hope pointed out the possibility of  
 ‘ that partiality being increased to a  
 ‘ degree of love equal to mine, still how  
 ‘ repugnant to every principle of honour  
 ‘ did it seem, to pursue a conduct which  
 ‘ must ultimately tend to bring only afflic-  
 ‘ tion to her whose happiness I would have  
 ‘ freely died to promote ; these reflecti-  
 ‘ ons determined me to subdue a passion,  
 ‘ which every way seemed only to lead to  
 ‘ despair and misery.—But if the task of

' forming these resolutions was painful,  
 ' far more so was that of putting them in  
 ' execution. How little cause has rea-  
 ' son to exult in her fancied triumphs;  
 ' though fortified with every prudent re-  
 ' solve, and strengthened by a formidable  
 ' train of consequences, let but passion  
 ' appear in full force, she quits her seat,  
 ' and trembling yields the empire to her  
 ' powerful adversary.

' No one had ever more occasion to  
 ' observe the justness of this remark than  
 ' I had the succeeding day, all the pru-  
 ' dential resolutions which I had formed  
 ' with such pain, gave way, and vanished  
 ' in her presence, and succeeding ones  
 ' were entered into only to undergo a si-  
 ' milar fate.

' Still mindful, however, of the sacri-  
 ' fice which every moment's cool reflec-  
 ' tion seemed to render more indispensa-  
 ' bly necessary. I seriously resolved to  
 ' deny



' deny myself every gratification arising  
 ' from her bewitching society, and at  
 ' length began to flatter myself I had so  
 ' far succeeded, that my ardent passion  
 ' had abated to a mere common friend-  
 ' ship; I endeavoured to persuade my-  
 ' self that I could now behold her un-  
 ' moved, and that it was to her brother  
 ' only, my visits were made; but the en-  
 ' tire fallacy of this persuasion a very  
 ' short time unfolded, and convinced me  
 ' how little I had gained.

' It had been resolved for some time,  
 ' that Henry should make an extensive  
 ' tour, it was proposed he should visit  
 ' the French and German courts, and  
 ' his absence was expected to continue a  
 ' considerable time. Preparations were  
 ' now making, and as we had ever loved  
 ' each other as brothers, our grief and  
 ' anxiety, as the time of his departure  
 ' drew nigh, was mutual and sincere.

' One

‘ One afternoon we had strolled into  
 ‘ the park, both pensive and dejected;  
 ‘ we walked on—and while he mused in  
 ‘ profound silence, I saw the tear trickle  
 ‘ down his cheek; deeply affected with  
 ‘ this mark of sensibility, I could not re-  
 ‘ strain mine. At length starting from  
 ‘ his reverie and seizing my hand, he ex-  
 ‘ claimed, “ What, my dear Giraldus  
 “ prevents your accompanying me in this  
 “ expedition? your uncle, I dare say,  
 “ would not object, and if you are wil-  
 “ ling I will this instant go and make  
 “ the proposal to my father.” ‘ This  
 ‘ idea had never before entered my mind,  
 ‘ but I found it so desirable in every  
 ‘ point of view, that I accepted his pro-  
 ‘ posal without hesitation; he scarcely  
 ‘ waited for my answer, but hurried back  
 ‘ to the castle with all the speed he could  
 ‘ exert, leaving me highly pleased with  
 ‘ his kind offer. But the pleasure was  
 ‘ short-lived, the recollection of his sister,  
 ‘ which my first surprise had driven from  
 ‘ my

' my mind, now returned in full force,  
 ' and, aided with the thoughts of a sepa-  
 ' ration so long, with all the probable  
 ' train of events that might happen dur-  
 ' ing my absence, almost overwhelmed  
 ' me with affliction.

' I now saw clearly how erroneous all  
 ' my late judgments had been on the  
 ' state of my heart, my affection instead of  
 ' being subdued, was, if possible, aug-  
 ' mented; again I called reason to my  
 ' aid, and passing all those arguments in  
 ' review on which I had so often formed  
 ' my wavering resolutions, dwelt on the  
 ' opportunity I should now have, by a  
 ' long absence, of endeavouring to over-  
 ' come a passion which nothing else  
 ' seemed capable of accomplishing. This  
 ' last consideration so far contributed to  
 ' tranquilize my mind, that when Henry  
 ' returned, I received the intelligence of  
 ' his having obtained his father's consent,  
 ' with

‘ with some share of that unbounded joy  
 ‘ he expressed in the communication.

‘ All that remained now, was to gain  
 ‘ my uncle’s approbation, and of that I  
 ‘ made so sure, that it did not for a mo-  
 ‘ ment interrupt my thoughts, now whol-  
 ‘ ly employed in anticipations of the hour  
 ‘ that was to separate me from her, whom  
 ‘ I loved above all the earth contained.

‘ I returned home sooner than usual to  
 ‘ make preparations for my intended jour-  
 ‘ ney; my uncle was out, and I employ-  
 ‘ ed the interval of his absence in form-  
 ‘ ing a list of those things of which I  
 ‘ should stand in need, I had nearly  
 ‘ finished it when he returned, and I then  
 ‘ immediately made him acquainted with  
 ‘ Henry’s proposal, and the kind permis-  
 ‘ sion of the baron.

‘ He heard my request with a frown,  
 ‘ and angrily returning the list I had pre-  
 ‘ sented



‘ sented to him, told me I might save my-  
 ‘ self that unnecessary trouble, for I might  
 ‘ rest assured, he should never grant me  
 ‘ his permission to go.

‘ A refusal so unexpected astonished  
 ‘ me to that degree, that I stood for some  
 ‘ moments quite confounded, at length  
 ‘ recovering myself, I endeavoured to set  
 ‘ forth the advantages that would result  
 ‘ to me from the expedition, and asked  
 ‘ his reasons for refusing me an opportu-  
 ‘ nity so eligible of seeing the world;  
 ‘ “seek not my reasons,” said he haugh-  
 ‘ tily, “let it suffice to know that my  
 ‘ determination is unalterable.”

‘ With difficulty I preserved my tem-  
 ‘ per at this capricious and arbitrary ex-  
 ‘ ertion of his authority. It was in vain  
 ‘ that I calmly urged my request, he sud-  
 ‘ denly broke from me with a solemn  
 ‘ charge, never to mention the subject  
 ‘ more

‘ more to him, under pain of his eternal  
 ‘ displeasure.

‘ Afraid of irritating him beyond all  
 ‘ hopes of compliance, I said no more that  
 ‘ evening, but determined in the morning  
 ‘ to request the baron’s interposition with  
 ‘ him in my behalf.

‘ My uncle had ever, for what reason  
 ‘ I could form no idea, looked on my  
 ‘ visits to the castle with visible jealousy  
 ‘ and ill-humour; as the friendship which  
 ‘ I had formed with Henry increased, this  
 ‘ unaccountable prejudice was proporti-  
 ‘ onably augmented.

‘ This conduct had almost estranged  
 ‘ the love I felt for him in my infancy,  
 ‘ when the loss of my parents had taught  
 ‘ me to look up to him as a father. If I  
 ‘ related to him any of our infantine  
 ‘ amusements at the castle, or spoke of  
 ‘ the kindness of the baron, it never fail-  
 ‘ ed

' ed to throw a gloomy reserve over his  
 ' countenance and behaviour; latterly he  
 ' had more than once forbade my visits  
 ' there, yet to the baron, who when I  
 ' absented myself constantly came to in-  
 ' quire the cause, his excuses were trivial  
 ' and unmeaning, and generally ended  
 ' with an ungracious permission of my  
 ' return.

' To him therefore, the following morn-  
 ' ing I communicated my uncle's strange  
 ' refusal, and requested his interposition;  
 ' he kindly consented, and I made myself  
 ' perfectly easy, not in the least doubting  
 ' his influence, but in this I was once  
 ' more mistaken, his solicitations were as  
 ' ineffectual as mine, and he returned  
 ' somewhat ruffled at his obstinate refusal,  
 ' for which he had not urged one reason-  
 ' able plea.

' Thus compelled to relinquish a jour-  
 ' ney that seemed so necessary to fix my  
 ' wavering

‘wavering resolutions, I saw the depar-  
 ‘ture of my companion, with mingled  
 ‘grief and indignation at my uncle’s ob-  
 ‘duracy.

‘Although, particularly from the re-  
 ‘cent circumstances, my home had be-  
 ‘come almost insupportable, I found it  
 ‘absolutely necessary to abridge the fre-  
 ‘quency of my visits to the castle, the  
 ‘absence of my companion seemed a  
 ‘good excuse, and I availed myself of it,  
 ‘determining at the same time to ac-  
 ‘quaint Elvina with my motives the first  
 ‘opportunity that should offer.

‘Hard indeed was the task I had im-  
 ‘posed upon myself; whenever I wan-  
 ‘dered out, my steps involuntarily moved  
 ‘towards the castle, frequently lost in  
 ‘thought on the pleasures of my infancy,  
 ‘have I strayed, unconscious of my path,  
 ‘till suddenly I have found myself within  
 ‘its precincts, then by an exertion of for-  
 ‘titude,



‘titude, which I never after failed to ap-  
 ‘prove, have I torn myself away and re-  
 ‘turned home.

‘My uncle, perceiving my visits were  
 ‘discontinued, became more placid, and  
 ‘treated me with far less harshness than  
 ‘he had been wont to do; this change in  
 ‘his behaviour might probably in time  
 ‘have rendered his house somewhat more  
 ‘agreeable to me, had not an event which  
 ‘happened shortly after, placed an insu-  
 ‘perable bar to our reconciliation, by se-  
 ‘parating us for ever.

‘The castle of the baron was situated  
 ‘in a beautiful and well wooded park, at  
 ‘the bottom of which<sup>d</sup> a broad and wind-  
 ‘ing sheet of water reflected the thick  
 ‘foliage that fringed its banks, close by  
 ‘its side on an eminence, stood a small  
 ‘temple, simple in its construction, its  
 ‘chief beauty was derived from the situ-  
 ‘ation, placed as it were by the hand of  
 ‘nature, to afford a refreshing shelter from  
 ‘meridian

' meridian suns. Thither in my youth-  
 ' ful days with my cheerful companions  
 ' was I wont to stray ; there enjoy those  
 ' happy moments uncorroded by care,  
 ' which maturer reason seeks in vain ;  
 ' and now, when happiness had faded on  
 ' my view, would I endeavour to recal  
 ' her by dwelling on the recollection of  
 ' the pleasures I had there enjoyed.

' The beauty of an autumnal morning  
 ' tempted me to walk out very early, the  
 ' eastern rays just trembled on the surface  
 ' of the lake, and gilded the foliage of  
 ' the woods ; I walked on towards the  
 ' temple to enjoy the charming scene,  
 ' often stopping to giew the varying beau-  
 ' ties of the light fleecy clouds. I had  
 ' not long remained there, when, to my  
 ' great surprise Elvina entered, led by  
 ' the sweetness of the morning, she,  
 ' like me, had risen early to enjoy its fra-  
 ' grance. She started at the appearance  
 ' of a man, and was retiring, but per-  
 ' cieving

'cieving as I turned about, who it was,  
 'she immediately came forward, and  
 'giving me her hand with a charming  
 'frankness, inquired why I had so long  
 'absented myself from the society of my  
 'friends; "the castle I suppose," said  
 she "has no attraction for you, since  
 "my brother has left it." 'This oppor-  
 'tunity seemed the properest for putting  
 'my late resolution into execution, and I  
 'determined to embrace it; That at-  
 'traction, that powerful attraction that  
 'still remains, said I, is the only cause  
 'that prevents my indulging myself in a  
 'continuance of those supreme pleasures,  
 'which I have so frequently enjoyed there,  
 'but prudence commands me to quit them,  
 'and I bow to her decision. Miserable  
 'wretch that I am, thus doomed to forego  
 'every thing that is capable of giving me  
 'joy, and happiness; to quit the society  
 'of friends most dear to me, and seek  
 'peace by endeavouring to drown reflec-  
 'tion!

' Pardon

' Pardon me dearest Elvina, pardon  
 ' my presumption, and forgive my laying  
 ' open to you a heart torn with anguish.  
 ' She remained silent, and I proceeded to  
 ' describe the progress of my passion, the  
 ' severe struggles I had undergone, and  
 ' my final resolution to abstain from visit-  
 ' ing at the castle.

' She heard my declaration with a kind  
 ' complacency on which the pride of  
 ' birth threw no shade, she seemed I  
 ' thought to pity my sufferings, and a  
 ' tear once stole into her eye. At length  
 ' she replied, " I cannot but acquiesce in  
 " the prudence of your determination, it  
 " is perhaps necessary, on every account,  
 " we should part; but do not quit us  
 " abruptly, my father will be surprised  
 " at it, and seek your reasons. For  
 " heaven's sake continued she, let no idea  
 " of the purport of this morning's con-  
 " versation, be ever brought to his mind;  
 " for though I am sincerely determined  
 " never



“ never to act in any concern of impor-  
 “ tance without his concurrence, yet  
 “ would I not for the world, give the least  
 “ shadow or cause of uneasiness to so  
 “ kind and tender a parent. For you,  
 “ she continued, with whom I have been  
 “ brought up in terms of intimacy since  
 “ my childhood, I have ever had, and  
 “ ever shall retain the sincerest esteem,  
 “ and let your future fate be what it may,  
 “ my best wishes will ever attend you,  
 “ and my heart will truly sympathize in all  
 “ your afflictions and in all your sorrows.”

‘ Overcome with so much goodness, I  
 ‘ threw myself at her feet in a transport  
 ‘ of gratitude, dearest Elvina, I cried, may  
 ‘ heaven shower its blessings upon you,  
 ‘ and make your happiness equal to the  
 ‘ consummate virtue with which it has  
 ‘ endowed you. I pressed her hand with  
 ‘ fervency to my lips, she arose, “ let us  
 “ go,” said she, “ I shall be missed at  
 “ the castle.” I led her out, and in a  
 ‘ few

‘ few moments saw my uncle hastily  
 ‘ crossing the path we were in ; he did  
 ‘ not appear to observe either of us, and  
 ‘ the thickness of the grove soon hid him  
 ‘ from our view.

‘ Without further noticing this inci-  
 ‘ dent, I accompanied Elvina to the cas-  
 ‘ tle, where her father gently chid me for  
 ‘ my long absence, but attributed it to the  
 ‘ loss of my companion ; after breakfast  
 ‘ I bade Elvina adieu, and with a heavy  
 ‘ heart returned home, alas that heavi-  
 ‘ ness was but a presage of my having  
 ‘ seen her for the last time.

‘ When I arrived at the house, I found  
 ‘ my uncle boiling with rage and indig-  
 ‘ nation against me, and so vehement  
 ‘ was his passion, that it was some time  
 ‘ ere I could discover the cause. At  
 ‘ length he informed me, that he had  
 ‘ overheard my conversation at the tem-  
 ‘ ple in the morning, that he had long  
 ‘ suspected

' suspected my motives for visiting at the  
 ' castle, and had taken that method to  
 ' convince himself of my baseness—so he  
 ' termed it—"and now," continued he,  
 "now that I am assured how ill a return  
 "you have made to all the kindness  
 "I have shewn you, my house shall no  
 "longer afford shelter to one so very  
 "worthless, and should you again appear  
 "in this neighbourhood, I shall not fail  
 "to make the baron acquainted with  
 "your artful designs on his daughter,  
 "who will doubtless take proper measures  
 "to prevent such a disgrace from falling  
 "on his family."

' It was in vain I endeavoured to con-  
 ' vince him that I had never mentioned  
 ' the subject to Elvina before, and that  
 ' my latter resolutions, which I had taken  
 ' that opportunity of acquainting her  
 ' with, to account for my unusual ab-  
 ' sence from the castle—deserved more of  
 ' praise than censure; he remained obsti-

‘ nately deaf to all I could say, and as it  
 ‘ were, predetermined not to be con-  
 ‘ vinced.

‘ At length, irritated in my turn, I  
 ‘ clearly see,’ said I, ‘ you only seek oc-  
 ‘ casion to dismiss me from your house;  
 ‘ if that is your intention, you have given  
 ‘ yourself unnecessary trouble, a single  
 ‘ intimation of your will, would at any  
 ‘ time have been sufficient. For my  
 ‘ part I only regret I have so long meanly  
 ‘ submitted and made myself a slave to  
 ‘ your caprice; yet do not call me un-  
 ‘ grateful, something whispers me, I am  
 ‘ not at all indebted to you for what I  
 ‘ have hitherto received; he started, and  
 ‘ looking wildly, asked me “ what I  
 ‘ “ meant,” “ ’tis no matter,” I replied,  
 ‘ for were you now to make me an offer  
 ‘ of all you possess to remain longer, I  
 ‘ would reject it with scorn.”

‘ Confusion overspread his counte-  
 nance,



' nance, he eagerly sought an explanation,  
 ' but without answering him I arose in  
 ' haste and quitted the house, overcome  
 ' with the variety of emotions which toge-  
 ' ther assailed my heart, I went immedi-  
 ' ately to the summer-house, there, as I  
 ' did not dare to trust myself with another  
 ' interview, I left a note for Elvina, giv-  
 ' ing her an account of the circumstances  
 ' that had happened since I saw her, and  
 ' bidding her, I feared, an eternal adieu.

' From the mean selfish disposition  
 ' which my uncle had on all occasions  
 ' exhibited, I was led to conclude that he  
 ' would never have undertaken the care  
 ' of my education, and the consequent  
 ' expense, unless something adequate had  
 ' been left for the purpose by my father,  
 ' and the emotion he betrayed when I  
 ' hinted at it, was a striking confirmation  
 ' of my conjectures.

' I have little recollection of the re-  
 D 2 maining

' maining events of that day, I wandered  
 ' about, half distracted, till night obliged  
 ' me to seek for shelter at a miserable  
 ' mountain cottage, where, on a bed of  
 ' straw I watched through the tedious  
 ' night. The next morning with little  
 ' refreshment, I again betook myself to  
 ' wandering, without any plan in view,  
 ' and entirely heedless of the way; at  
 ' length I reached a wild chain of moun-  
 ' tains, these with difficulty I ascended,  
 ' and from the summit beheld only a  
 ' widely extended barren country; I then  
 ' descended towards the plain, following  
 ' the tracks of the shepherds, a tempe-  
 ' tuous night came quickly on, and by  
 ' mere chance I at length discovered the  
 ' castle, where, weary and fatigued, I took  
 ' up my abode for the night.

' Of the subsequent events you are al-  
 ' ready informed. I have been purposely  
 ' circumstantial in detailing the occur-  
 ' rences of my life, that you might be  
 thoroughly

‘thoroughly convinced the assassin had  
 ‘mistaken his object. In so doing I fear  
 ‘I have trespassed too much on your pa-  
 ‘tience, and wearied you by a relation  
 ‘altogether uninteresting.’

Giraldus ceased, and Lord Albert  
 having politely thanked him for the trou-  
 ble he had taken, they parted for the  
 evening.

## CHAP.

## CHAP. IV.

---

Do his bidding; strike.

Thou may'st be valiant in a better cause;

But now thou seem'st a coward.

SHAKESPEARE.

---

ON the following evening while Giraldus was sitting with Lord Albert, the peasant entered in great haste and trepidation; he informed them that he had observed some horsemen loitering about the beacon, and just then surprized one at the window of the room where they were sitting



sitting, attentively observing those within; that finding himself discovered he had galloped off with the greatest speed, and was immediately joined by his companions, who had concealed themselves behind a rock at a small distance. "Now  
 "I'll be bound for it," continued the peasant, "these are some of the same  
 "gang of villains that would have murdered this gentleman at the castle the  
 "other day; now if I might be so bold  
 "as to advise, I think we had all better  
 "arm ourselves in the most compleatest  
 "manner, to shew that we are in a proper  
 "state to receive them; for my part I  
 "can furnish a rusty sword for myself, and  
 "an old battle-axe for Robin, when he  
 "returns, and then it is my opinion we  
 "shall do."

Though the gentlemen could scarcely forbear smiling at the peasant's description of the contents of his arsenal, yet they could not but feel some apprehension at

this new circumstance ; it seemed so evidently a part of the plot hinted at by the dying man, and a further concurrence to the truth of his testimony, that they no longer hesitated to believe some dark and bloody design was on foot.

At this certainty their amazement increased, each fancied the other the destined man, as each was assured it could not be himself ; to keep strictly on their guard however, was now become essentially necessary, particularly in the evening, a time best adapted for the execution of any dark purpose which they might have in view.

The succeeding day brought back the peasant's son with some servants from the Castle of Melbourne.—The Earl, on finding how much he was indebted to a stranger for the preservation of his son's life, had written a letter, wherein he acknowledged his deep sense of the obligation,  
and

and added a request, that when Lord Albert should be sufficiently recovered to travel, he would accompany him to Melbourne castle, where the welcome he should receive, would testify the gratitude his kindness had inspired.—He further observed, that nothing but a severe indisposition from which he was recovering, should have prevented his making the request in person; Lord Albert, though he never mentioned it, had from the first the same intentions, but learning that his father had given the invitation, he now reenforced it with all his powers of persuasion, adding, that as he meant shortly to visit the continent, Giraldus, if he would accompany him, might probably have an opportunity of meeting his friend again in the course of their peregrination.

Giraldus who had yet no fixed plan in view for his future conduct, saw at once the eligibility of acceding to this proposal, and therefore required little persua-

sion to determine his acceptance of it. Interest however, had no share in fixing his determination, plunged into the wide world with scarcely a friend, or common acquaintance, with a heart teeming with sensibility and philanthropy, he naturally and sincerely attached himself to whoever appeared worthy of his esteem, and in the present instance, he embraced the offer of his friend more from this principle, than from any hopes of advantage that might arise to himself from his compliance; the concluding information also had its weight, and had his resolution wavered before, its influence would have proved decisive.

As Lord Albert continued to recover, he began to make small excursions with his friend round the neighbouring country, though they prudently avoided the castle, judging it in the present state of affairs both unsafe and unnecessary. However highly their curiosity and attention might be excited, there was no probability



bability of having them gratified at present, they found themselves compelled to wait until time should develop the mystery. The appearance seen by Giraldus in the room where he lay on the first night, was another circumstance that dwelt on their minds, they could not, for several reasons, suppose it to be the assassin who was afterwards slain, and the mode of its sudden disappearance was yet entirely unknown.

These were subjects that frequently employed their speculation during the remainder of their stay at the beacon; but as every attempt at explanation only sunk them deeper in wild and improbable conjectures, they were resolved at a future time to return sufficiently prepared to investigate them more fully, and put an end to a state of suspense now rendered almost insupportable.

When Lord Albert was deemed sufficiently

ficiently recovered to undertake the journey, they bade adieu to the beacon and its inhabitants, after amply rewarding their kind host for his care and attention ; who with tears of gratitude in his eyes, humbly took his leave, and promised to send them immediate intelligence, should any material occurrence take place at the castle during their absence.

They continued to travel at an easy pace for the remainder of the day, through a country wild and romantic, where mountains towered above each other, and impending rocks seemed to threaten the traveller below. This scenery continued till the sun descending shed its departing splendor over the whole, marking with catching lustre the prominent parts of the nearer objects, and enveloping the whole distance in one bright glow of purple.

As the place where they designed to spend the night, was now but a few miles  
distant

distant, they felt no concern at the evening's approach, but continued their usual pace, often stopping to view the scenery, or point out some peculiar beauty to each other. At length they arrived at the margin of an extensive lake, which sweeping with an ample stretch round a bold promontory, lost itself among the distant hills. The moon had now risen, in calm majesty diffusing her silver lustre on the wild scenery, and lending another, though not less beautiful appearance, to the face of nature ; her mild beam now trembled on the surface of the lake, now played on the dashing waters of a distant cascade, that tumbled its copious torrent over an abrupt mass of rugged and disjointed rocks, and seemed lulled to peace by the calm bosom on which it fell.

The silence of the night was only interrupted by the roaring of the water-fall, instinctively they stopped to view the sublime scene, and their accordant minds,  
like

like strings in unison, vibrated to the idea it inspired.—Thus the busy restless soul of man rolls on from scene to scene, from change to change, seeking peace, and finding none; impetuously gliding over life's pebbled channel, and headlong terminating its fretful course.

They remained some time in mute contemplation, and the servants had strayed to a considerable distance, when suddenly a number of men rushed from a thicket, and in a moment, ere they had time to recollect themselves, seized, dismounted, and bound them, while a party went forward in quest of the servants, who seeing the fate of their Lord, and the superior number of the banditti, rode off with precipitation.

In the mean time two of those who remained, having blindfolded Giraldus, re-mounted him on his horse and led him away, leaving Lord Albert, who in vain entreated



entreated that he might not be separated from his companion, to undergo a similar operation.

They led Giraldus silently forward through bye-paths, and sometimes up steep acclivities, for near an hour, when they stopped at the door of an uninhabited cottage. He had inquired, and now renewed his entreaties, to be informed of their motives for seizing him, but without heeding his questions, or uttering a single word, they conveyed him into an inner apartment, and securely fastening the door, left him alone to ruminate on this strange adventure.

From the whole tenor of their conduct it was evident that robbery was not their sole motive, they had yet attempted to take nothing from him, except his sword, and that they had of course secured at the first onset. Their intentions he was therefore compelled to consider as tending

to something of a far more horrid nature, and the words of the dying man came again to his recollection; although, as he was still led to believe, they had mistaken their object, he had no means of convincing them of that mistake, since their obstinate deafness to all he could urge, must prove an insuperable bar to conviction.

Thus circumstanced, he awaited the event in a state of agonizing suspense, on which no ray of comfort darted even a transient gleam.

A considerable time elapsed ere the men returned, they brought fresh horses, on one of which Giraldus was again mounted; once more he endeavoured to gain some information of their intentions, but the same taciturnity was preserved, and they immediately rode away with him at a full gallop. As the bandage still remained on his eyes, he could form no idea of the

the direction they had taken, and his conjectures only tended to involve him in greater perplexity; the same pace was continued for several hours, till the soft treading of the horses convinced him they had quitted the main road. He now made a secret effort to remove the impediment from his sight, and so far succeeded as to gain a slight glimpse of the country; he perceived they were travelling over a heath, and as the grey dawning light increased, he shortly, to his great amazement, beheld the castle of Hardayne.

Since his last fatal adventure there, Giraldus had beheld this place with an instinctive horror, his thoughts revolted from the recollection of it with a dismay he could not account for; and now when he perceived they were leading him to it, he was convinced some bloody design was in agitation; the hope that was founded on the uncertainty of their intentions now forsook him, he became quite frantic, and  
the

the man who rode behind in vain endeavoured to restrain him from throwing himself off the horse : they fell together, and Giraldus, much hurt by the fall, lay insensible and apparently lifeless.

A young man who was cutting firewood at some distance, seeing them fall, without knowing the cause, threw down his axe and ran to assist them ; he observed that only one appeared hurt, the other two were busied about him, but no sooner had he come up with them, and seen the face of Giraldus, than he broke out into a violent exclamation of surprise and grief.—It was the peasant's son, Robin !—Pushing the men rudely aside, he threw himself down by the body, and gave a vent to his simple though expressive sorrow. He then made divers inquiries respecting Lord Albert, but receiving no answer, he suddenly rose up, and taking Giraldus in his arms, walked off with him towards the beacon.

The



The men, who had been hitherto mute spectators, now seeing themselves in danger of losing their prey, stepped forward, and commanded the peasant to lay him down. "No, no," he replied, "I will take him home with me, and dead or alive, he will have care taken of him there; you may follow if you please." It was in vain to remonstrate, he was determined, and they were at length compelled to exert all their force to make him relinquish his hold. Exasperated at this rough treatment, he placed his friend gently on the ground, and attacked them both with such impetuosity and address, that they with difficulty sustained the furious onset; for a long time he maintained the unequal combat, till overpowered by their superior number, he sunk beneath their blows, and they left him on the heath, deprived of sense and motion.

They now made their way towards the castle with Giraldu, who soon began to recover

recover; his recollection returned as they entered the gateway, and perceiving his situation, he again endeavoured to break from them, but he was so much weakened by his fall, that all his attempts were ineffectual. They conveyed him across the court, then descending a flight of steps that led to the vaults, brought him to one, the most dreary and melancholy, there, fastening the door, they left him and returned to seek their horses, which had escaped while they were engaged with the peasant.

Stupified with his wound, Giraldus remained almost unconscious of his situation: he rested his aching head on his hand, as he sat on an old worm-eaten bench, and retained the same posture till one of the men returned. The noise of opening the door roused him, he started up, and recollecting himself, eagerly demanded to know by what authority, and for what motives he was confined there.

“ Of

"Of that," replied the man, "I am not  
 "permitted to inform you, but if you  
 "wish to be treated with kindness, I  
 "would advise you to be patient, and re-  
 "frain from those inquiries which can  
 "only prove fruitless; provisions will be  
 "brought you 'till—" he stopped, "'till  
 "when?" cried Giraldus eagerly, "'till  
 "your fate is decided," replied the man,  
 "tell me then, I conjure thee," said Gi-  
 raldus, "with whom does it rest?" The  
 man turned about to go, "stay," he con-  
 tinued, "be convinced you have mista-  
 "ken the person you meant to have seiz-  
 "ed, and are now only possessed of one,  
 "who though almost destitute of friends,  
 "has at least no enemy cruel enough to  
 "immure him in this wretched place.  
 "You are," he continued, "you must  
 "be now convinced you have been de-  
 "ceived." The man looked earnestly at  
 him, "No," he replied, while he shook  
 his head, "No, be assured I have not,"  
 then

then abruptly turning about, he quitted the place.

Left in this state of horrid uncertainty, the mind of Giraldus, harrassed and distracted, employed itself during the remainder of the day in wild and improbable conjectures; he endeavoured to seek oblivion in sleep, but his disturbed imagination banished repose, and painted in more glowing colours the terrific imagery which his wild fancy had conjured up.

At length his guards returned, they had brought provisions, a lamp, and some straw for his bed; again he renewed his inquiries, but the man who had conversed with him, fearful least his companion should be made acquainted with it, endeavoured by signs to prevent his making it known; he heeded not the hint, but became so violent and clamorous, that perceiving his phrenzy, they lit the lamp and quitted him with some haste. A  
calm



calm languor now succeeded, he sunk on his straw, and in disturbed slumber, lost for a time the consciousness of his wretched situation.

A noise that seemed to proceed from an effort to open one of the doors of the vault again roused him; starting up he called out loudly, no answer was returned, the noise ceased, and no further occurrence disturbed the silence of the night. Towards morning he felt himself somewhat refreshed, but cold and chill from the dampness of the place; he arose and traversed his dreary mansion with quick steps till the morning's light beamed in at his high grated window, he then took some refreshments, and as his mind had now become more calm, he endeavoured to trace out the cause of his confinement. The deeply hidden mystery however, baffled every conjecture he could form, and only involved him in still greater perplexity.

Sometimes

Sometimes he thought his uncle had made the baron acquainted with what he had threatened, who might have taken these measures to punish his supposed presumption, but when he recollected his kind and generous disposition, he blamed himself for having for a moment, attributed such cruel proceedings to him; at other times his uncle would become the object of his suspicion, but his want of power, even if he had the inclination, soon banished that improbable idea.

Whoever were the principals in this affair, a moment's cool reflection convinced Giraldus he had nothing to hope from their lenity, however long their intentions might be deferred, his death, he foresaw, was the ultimate object to which all their measures tended. The man whom he had slain evidently acted under the same authority, and had forewarned him of others who were employed for the same horrid purpose, and now, when he was completely

completely in their power, he could scarcely suppose that any humane motives would induce them to shrink back from their original design: the pains they had taken to entrap him, the place where he was confined, so well adapted to the purpose, all declared they would not. Thus circumstanced what hope remained, what consolation from the still-cherished idea of his having been mistaken for another?—none—from such a place, from such circumstances, hope fled dismayed, and black succeeding despair alone possessed her vacated seat.

But Giraldus, whose heart seemed ever to gain strength as his circumstances became more desperate, bore the conviction with a manly fortitude, that scorned to shrink from his fate, however severe it might prove. Yet when his thoughts returned to Elvina, his heart melted with tenderness at the recollection. “Love-  
 “liest maid,” he cried “must I then  
 Vol. I. E “ never

“ never behold you more, must those  
 “ transient, though exquisitely happy mo-  
 “ ments which I have passed in your so-  
 “ ciety never return, alas! how have  
 “ circumstances eventfully changed since  
 “ I last beheld you; then unconscious of  
 “ that dire enmity which has since risen  
 “ against me on every side, I heard, or  
 “ thought I heard, no voice but that of  
 “ friendship; now sinking a miserable  
 “ prey to unknown enemies, who in the  
 “ gloom of this horrid dungeon endea-  
 “ vour to conceal from the world their  
 “ mysterious and bloody designs. O  
 “ Elvina, O Henry! my loved compa-  
 “ nions, in vain shall ye mourn, for ye  
 “ will mourn, the uncertain fate of the  
 “ lost Giraldus, this dreary mansion will,  
 “ with the wretched victim, bury the fatal  
 “ truth, ’till avenging heaven shall make  
 “ it known, and exhibit the bloody assas-  
 “ sin to the world; then let the remem-  
 “ brance of your unfortunate companion,  
 “ sometimes find a place in your bosoms,  
 “ and



“and when the tear of sensibility and  
 “pity, shall steal into your eye, may suc-  
 “ceeding joy chase it away, and may  
 “the indulgent hand of heaven redouble  
 “on you, the happiness I have lost.”

When he adverted to Lord Albert, the uncertainty of what had befallen him added new poignancy to his afflictions; “Must I thus,” said he, “lose all my  
 “friends, was I born only to bring mis-  
 “fortune or grief on all whom I esteem  
 “and love, a fatality seems of late to  
 “attend every transaction in which I  
 “engage.” He was proceeding in his reflection, but the sound of voices caught his attention, two persons seemed in deep conversation, he drew near the door, and listened in profound silence. They spoke so low that it was only at intervals he could distinguish what was said, and even then so imperfectly, that it was impossible to learn the subject of their discourse, he was therefore preparing to go, when one

of them, in a somewhat louder tone, mentioned his name; this again excited his curiosity, and he remained in fixt attention, "that is his intention however," said the person who had spoken before, "you will find it so in the end." "If it is," replied the other, "I must inform you, that I am determined not to be concerned in it, I think blood enough has been shed already—would to heaven—this castle then had I never known"—the rest of the sentence was lost, and the reply was given in a remonstrating voice, from which Giraldus could only gather detached words—"when he gave me his commands to execute this business, he assured me," said the other, "that he"—again the voice sunk too low to be heard, after some time:—"then you agree?" said the first. "I do, you have convinced me there is no alternative, but I promise you it shall be the last business of that nature in which I will be concerned."

"You

“ You must act as you please in future,  
 “ only be stedfast now, we must fix on  
 “ the means speedily and make ——  
 “ acquainted with them.” Though some  
 name had been frequently mentioned, yet  
 Giraldus, from the low voice in which it  
 was pronounced, could never catch the  
 least syllable of it, he anxiously wished  
 to know who the principal was in this  
 affair, but his wishes were vain; the men  
 as soon as they had made the above de-  
 termination, walked away to a more dis-  
 tant part, and he heard them no more.

Giraldus, convinced that his fate was  
 now decided sunk for a time under the  
 accumulated horrors of his situation,  
 though hope had before deserted him, the  
 confirmation of his apprehensions brought  
 with it a train of dreadful ideas, and  
 overwhelmed his mind with terror and  
 dismay. “ Yet why,” he cried, “ should  
 “ I wish to live, all prospects of happi-  
 “ ness in this world have long been blast-

"ed, why seek to prolong life only to  
 "prolong misery ; could I escape from  
 "hence, I see nothing before me but de-  
 "pendance, wretchedness, and disappoint-  
 "ment.—To die now, will be to shun  
 "them all, and preclude the possibility  
 "of feeling more. No, I will no longer  
 "shrink from death, I will court him as  
 "a friend, I will bare my bosom to the  
 "stroke that shall set me free. Hail then  
 "thou gloomy cavern, thy dark recess is  
 "but the portal to a temple of light, wel-  
 "come, thou glittering dagger that tears  
 "aside the veil and gives the stranger en-  
 "trance."

CHAP.



## CHAP. V.

---

Oh! partner of my infant griefs and joys;  
Big with the scenes now past, my heart o'erflows;  
Bids each endearment, fair as once, to rise  
And dwells luxurious on her melting woes.

MICKLE.

---

MEANWHILE Lord Albert was bound by the banditti who remained, in the same manner as Giraldu, and conveyed across the country with the same dispatch and silence, but the violence of the motion was too much for one yet scarcely recover-

ed from a severe illness, and he fainted in the arms of the person who held him on the horse.

When recollection returned he found himself in the cottage of a villager, who with his wife, was using every means for his recovery; they seemed overjoyed at the success of their endeavours, and in answer to his inquiries, informed him, that he had been left there by some horsemen who had just rescued him from a party of banditti, and that, after strict injunctions to treat him tenderly, they had immediately gone in quest of the robbers.

Whatever joy Lord Albert might feel at this unexpected deliverance, it was greatly damped, when he reflected on the probable situation of his companion, he much feared no such fortune had attended him, and from the known sanguinary disposition of the banditti, he could entertain

entertain little, or no hope, that they would so far deviate from their usual practice as to spare his life. "Alas my friend, my deliverer," he exclaimed, "is this the reward of all the care and attention you have shewn me, in rescuing me from death, and from that horrid dungeon which would for ever have concealed me from the search of a distracted father; let me hope it will yet be in my power to evince my gratitude, I will seek you to the farthest verge of the kingdom, I will yet if possible rescue you from the hands of those bloody villains, and revenge all your wrongs on their devoted heads."

The animated glow of resentment which flushed his cheek as these thoughts passed through his mind, soon died away, a pale languor succeeded, and as he now found himself extremely unwell, he desired the good woman to prepare him a bed,

where, as soon as it was ready, he retired.

The great anxiety and fatigue which he had undergone, now contributed to bring on some symptoms of a fever, and these at the return of his servants (for it was they who had rescued him from the banditti) were greatly augmented. He stretched out his hand, as they entered the room, and thanked them for their exertions, anxiously adding inquiries respecting his friend; but on this head they could give him no information. "We pursued," said they, "that party of the banditti who were left with you, cautiously following at a proper distance, till the time when you fainted; this accident seemed to throw them into some confusion, part of them alighted and took you off; we judged this to be a good opportunity, and immediately galloped towards them; on perceiving us, they remounted their horses, leaving



“ing you on the grass, and rode off with  
 “such precipitation that it was impossi-  
 “ble for us to overtake them.”

They added that they had since been in pursuit of them, but could gain no intelligence of the course they had taken.

Lord Albert again thanked them for their care and fidelity, promising to reward them amply when he returned home, he then gave orders immediately to pursue the route of the other party, and endeavour by every means in their power to gain intelligence of Giraldu, they accordingly departed, leaving one only to attend upon him till their return.

As he felt his fever still increasing, he was again compelled to call in some medical assistance, and fortunately a person of considerable eminence in that profession dwelt in the same village. On visiting his patient, though he disguised his apprehensions,

apprehensions, it was easy to observe that he entertained no very flattering hopes of his recovery; he however, gave proper directions to his attendants, and sent such medicines as the case required.

All night the fever continued to increase; he became delirious, and raved incessantly of Giraldus, at times conjuring him to come to his aid—then, as if he saw the banditti about to murder him, he would start up quite frantic, and loudly call upon them to stop their bloody hands. For three days the doctor despaired of his recovery, but when the crisis of his disorder approached, some medicines which he had applied gave it a favourable turn, a violent perspiration and tranquil sleep ensued, from which he awoke perfectly restored to reason. So much however was he reduced by this violent attack, that he could not hope to quit this place for a considerable time.

At

At a short distance from the village stood the castle of the Baron St. Austin, a gentleman of universal benevolence and philanthropy, his only study and pleasure was that of diffusing peace and happiness around him, he aided and comforted the distressed and afflicted, and the poor never returned from the gates of his castle without a fervent blessing on its benevolent possessor. A large portion of his income, which was very considerable, was yearly devoted to charitable ends; he knew no gratification in heaping up useless treasure, but he felt all that benign pleasure which arises from the consciousness of its proper distribution, and his tenants and dependants looked up to him with love, veneration, and gratitude.

As soon as he became acquainted with the illness of Lord Albert, he immediately waited upon him, to make him an offer of those accommodations at the castle, which it was not to be expected he could  
meet

meet with at the small cottage where he remained; but the ill state in which he found him rendered such a proposal unnecessary for the present; he however, with his usual kindness, took care that nothing should be wanting which might tend to expedite his recovery, or lessen the inconvenience of his habitation; when, therefore, he had regained the use of his reason he made him frequent visits, and his conversation tended in some measure to remove that gloom, which, from continually brooding over the fate of his friend, hung heavy on his mind.

Thus passed the time, till Lord Albert was deemed sufficiently strong to undergo the fatigues of removing to the castle, the necessity of which the baron had frequently enforced with all the warmth of sincere friendship. "My dear friend, he would say, "however you may wish, "from motives of delicacy and from the  
 "fear



"fear of giving trouble, to conceal it  
 "from me, yet you must be assured how  
 "well I am convinced that the accommo-  
 "dations you meet with, are by no means  
 "adequate to what your situation in life  
 "require; to me the task of alleviating the  
 "distress or inconvenience of others is  
 "not less a pleasure than I feel it a duty,  
 "believe me, I do not speak from vanity,  
 "I wish only to induce you to accept of  
 "that, which were we to change situati-  
 "ons, I am confident you would enforce."

Lord Albert who had only withstood  
 the solicitations of the Baron from the  
 fear of giving trouble, forcibly felt the  
 kindness of his argument, and consented  
 to become an inmate at the castle till his  
 health should be sufficiently re-established  
 to return home. Thither he was accord-  
 ingly removed, and experienced every at-  
 tention of his kind host, who while he  
 continued confined to his chamber, de-  
 voted

voted the greater part of his time to the company of his guest.

When he was sufficiently recovered to quit his room, the Baron introduced him to his daughter, a young lady whose disposition and personal charms rendered her the object of general admiration; graceful and unaffected in her person and manners, with a countenance in which every generous sentiment was depicted, few could behold her without acknowledging her powerful attractions; but when to these were added those charms of disposition which more perfect intimacy unfolded, to have withstood their combined power would have betrayed a degree of insensibility of which few could boast.

It may reasonably be supposed that the Baron could not fail to receive frequent solicitations for the honour of an alliance so desirable in every point of view; but he

he was not a man to be influenced by the motives which at that time too generally prevailed; his indulgent heart could ill bear the idea of sacrificing a child at the shrine of avarice, and rightly considering her happiness more immediately concerned in an affair of such importance, he was contented with reserving to himself a negative voice, and constantly referred the claims of those suitors whom he thought worthy, to the decision of her whose future fate must be most materially influenced by it. This conduct, which he thought most likely to ensure to his beloved daughter that happiness he so ardently wished her, was repaid on her side by the highest degree of filial veneration and love, which the mutual confidence it tended to inspire, promised to render as permanent as it was sincere.

Hitherto all the applications of her numerous suitors had been politely rejected; nor were all the means which love could devise

devise, sufficient to draw her from that apparently general indifference, to form a decided preference for any one ; in her behaviour modest, affable, and discreet, she was wholly untinged with that coquettish and unfeeling vanity which seeks to gain those affections it never means to return : her rejections were therefore immediate and decisive.

Such was the daughter of the Baron St. Austin, in whose society Lord Albert was destined to pass the remaining term of his stay, his heart at first sight bore testimony of the power of her charms, and increasing intimacy proportionably augmented his admiration : the illness he had undergone now seemed a blessing, since it had been the means of bringing him to the knowledge of a lady so accomplished ; the thoughts of returning home already began to appear unpleasing, and the time seemed to glide away with redoubled quickness.

From



From this state of tranquil bliss he was aroused by the return of his servants, they had pursued every probable method of discovering Giralduſ, but all their efforts had proved ineffectual, and they were compelled to relinquish a ſearch that afforded not the ſmalleſt intelligence. Lord Albert felt the diſappointment ſeverely, ſcarcely any hope now remained that his friend had eſcaped, his fate appeared but too evident, and the reflection again ſunk him into deep dejection; he would himſelf have ſought him, but the abſurdity of a purſuit where no clue could be obtained, alone prevented ſo uſeleſs a meaſure.

The Baron perceived his melancholy, and endeavoured to divert his mind from the ſecret cauſe that oppreſſed it, he frequently took him on ſmall excuſions round his eſtate, and employed all the means in his power to draw off his attention to the other objects; in this he partly

ly succeeded, a latent hope would also at times arise, that his friend might possibly yet remain alive, and the thought would yield a transient relief.

The fair daughter of his kind host would frequently accompany him in his walks, to point out those situations which commanded an extensive, or beautiful prospect, and her presence contributed to dissipate every painful reflection.

Sometimes as they strayed through the shades of the forest, or rested on the rustic bench, he read to her passages from favourite authors, and thus, by employing his imagination on various themes, diverted its force from that point on which it was most prone to dwell. In this pleasing amusement he had been employed one evening, and was preparing to lay aside his book, when, on turning over the vacant leaves, to his great surprise he read the name of Elvina.

“ Good

"Good heaven," he exclaimed, with an emotion which he could not check, but immediately recollecting himself, and lowering his voice, "can this be your name, madam?" "Yes," she replied, equally surprised at the question and exclamation. "Excuse my inquiry," said he, "I have had the pleasure of hearing it before, but till now did not"—he hesitated.—"I scarcely know what I am saying," continued he, "a similarity of names and circumstances will oftentimes call back to our minds the recollection of past events; the sun is near setting, shall we return to the castle?" "It will be very proper," she replied, "the evening's air may be pernicious to an invalid." The conversation which Lord Albert endeavoured to turn on indifferent subjects, as they walked towards the castle, had frequent intermissions; his mind was evidently abstracted from that on which he was speaking, and a sigh would sometimes escape. Elvina  
 on

on the other hand was somewhat surprised at his manner, but judging it to be the effect of some misfortune that had recently befallen him, she endeavoured to divert his attention; and kept up a conversation which would otherwise soon have died away.

The succeeding day after breakfast, Lord Albert took occasion to inquire of the Baron, as if casually, whether he was acquainted with a young gentleman of the name of Giraldus, who, he understood, had formerly dwelt in the neighbouring village. The eager reply of "Yes, are you acquainted with him," and the suffusion which the cheek of Elvina underwent while she anxiously attended for the cause of the inquiry, plainly indicated how great an interest he held in the family.

"It is but lately," said he, "that I became acquainted with him, but if gratitude for services which I fear I shall  
" never



“ never have an opportunity of repaying,  
 “ can be substituted in the place of long  
 “ continued friendship, I may justly rank  
 “ him among my first friends.” He then  
 related to them the circumstances from  
 which, by his timely exertions, he had  
 been rescued, and concluded with the in-  
 formation of the manner of their unfor-  
 tunate separation, concealing however,  
 the apprehensions he entertained from  
 the sanguinary disposition of the banditti.

The countenance of Elvina underwent  
 a variety of changes during the above  
 recital, pity, esteem, and admiration,  
 successively displayed their corresponding  
 expressions, but at the final information,  
 the hope which had before fluttered in  
 her cheek, gave way to “ the pale cast of  
 “ fear,” her emotion became too great to be  
 concealed, and without trusting her voice  
 with a single inquiry, she arose, and has-  
 tily quitted the room. The kind-hearted  
 Baron felt little less, the esteem which he  
 had

had long entertained for Giraldus was  
 heightened by this new proof of his ten-  
 derness and humanity, and he now hinted  
 his fears, that an escape from their hands  
 would be next to an impossibility, he la-  
 mented his having so suddenly left his  
 home, while he expressed his surprize at  
 the cause. "I have never yet," said he,  
 "heard it accounted for, and his uncle  
 "is of so strange a disposition, that I  
 "could not gain any plausible infor-  
 "mation from him, probably it might  
 "be some difference between them; but  
 "what most amazes me is, that he should  
 "leave this place without endeavouring  
 "to see those whom he was confident  
 "were his friends, and quit an asylum  
 "that would ever have been open to him.  
 "When I mentioned this to his uncle his  
 "answer was, that where ingratitude was  
 "the leading principle, we should not be  
 "surprised at any apparent strangeness of  
 "conduct. I turned hastily away from  
 the

“ the malicious detracter, and have never  
 “ since conversed with him.”

Lord Albert apologized for this seeming neglect, attributing it to a motive somewhat different from the real one, which he did not think himself entitled to explain ; he again deplored the misfortunes of his friend, and lamented that want of information, which deprived him of every means of rescuing him from his fate, adding, that could he gain the least intelligence he would fly to the farthest verge of the kingdom to preserve him. The Baron arose evidently much affected, and they walked out together.

In the mean time Elvina had retired to her apartment, there to give vent to the piercing sorrows that oppressed her heart. From early infancy she had considered Giraldus as a brother ; a similarity of sentiments and disposition, fixed her affections on her two companions, nor could

she decide to which she gave the preference. Unconscious of those distinctions which mankind have created, the young Elvina saw no impropriety in yielding her love to one who appeared to her in every respect worthy of it; nor when more mature reason had taught her the prejudices by which our conduct is directed, did she suffer herself to be influenced by their dictates, further than as they were in some measure interwoven with that implicit obedience she ever paid to the will of an indulgent parent. After all she knew not how deeply her affections were engaged, till the proposal of going abroad aroused her; for the first time she then perceived how much she was interested in the fate of Giraldu, his ready acquiescence offended her, it seemed she thought, to argue an unfeeling indifference on which she could scarcely bear to think; when however her brother had departed, and he still continued to absent himself from the castle, her surprise exceeded the anger



ger she had before felt, a little reflection convinced her of the cause, and she acknowledged with tears of gratitude the motives which had influenced a conduct she had so greatly mistermmed unfeeling. The short conversation she held with him at the summer-house shewed how rightly her conjectures had been formed, and fixed her determination to profit by an example which she so much admired; the intelligence conveyed in the note that had been left at his departure, fell however like a thunder bolt on the tender heart of Elvina, ill prepared for so sudden a shock, the little hope he expressed of ever beholding her more, and the distracted stile in which it was written, contributed to overwhelm her heart with affliction; a sad presentiment that his fears were too true came over her, and she gave way to all the bitterness of grief; concealing however from her father every thing that might tend to give him pain.

Such

Such was the state of her mind when Lord Albert arrived, and the confirmation he brought of all she had foreboded, renewed in her breast the most piercing sorrow, she wished much to inquire more minutely of every particular, but feared her fortitude was unequal to the task; again a ray of hope would sometimes dart its transient beam across the lowering prospect, and a thousand circumstances would rise to support it, but though she could not but perceive the fallacy, it contributed to yield a slight degree of calmness to her perturbed mind.

On the other hand Lord Albert felt equally miserable, a double cause operated to destroy his peace of mind, the loss of his friend for whom he felt a sincere regard, and the entire overthrow of all his new formed hopes in respect to Elvina; he saw how deeply her affections were engaged, and knew too much of her character, for a moment to flatter himself that

that even the confirmation of his late intelligence would in any measure tend to promote his views ; her heart seemed invariably fixed on one object, and he respected her too much to doubt its sincerity.

But even supposing it were otherwise, he had yet no certain intelligence that his friend had fallen a sacrifice to the banditti, and to endeavour to supplant him in the affections of one whom he almost adored, accorded but little with his principles of gratitude and honour ; he therefore determined to banish from his heart a passion which under such circumstances he could only indulge at the expense of his principles.

The next morning Lord Albert proposed a walk, and as the Baron was engaged, Elvina accompanied him, she wished much to hear a more particular relation of the circumstances,

than she had the preceding day, and took this opportunity to solicit the recital. Lord Albert complied with her request, and endeavoured to keep alive in her that hope which he did not himself feel, the frequent sighs which burst from his fair auditor, plainly shewed how little she was convinced by his reasonings, and he likewise saw, that had he been so inclined, he could never have hoped to gain an interest in a heart so deeply engaged; mournful and dejected they at length returned to the castle, and parted to enjoy their meditations alone.

The impolicy of remaining at the castle became every day more apparent to Lord Albert, his peace of mind he saw would be the price of his longer stay, and he was resolved to fly a place so replete with danger, where nothing remained for hope, and every thing for fear. He therefore took the earliest opportunity of bidding adieu to the Baron St. Austin and



and his amiable daughter, expressing to the former the deep sense he should ever entertain of his kindness and hospitality ; to Elvina he said little, but his looks betrayed what he felt at this exertion of fortitude, he pressed her hand to his lips, and sighed a farewell with an accent so mournful, that she for the first time saw the state of his heart, a silent tear of mingled esteem and tender recollection fell on her cheek as she turned hastily away, and with a heavy heart Lord Albert directed his course to the castle of Melbourne.

CHAP.

121

CHAP. VI.

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Rous'd from their slumbers,  
In grim array the grizly spectres rise,  
Grim horrible, and obstinately sullen  
Pass and repass, hush'd as the foot of night.  
Again ! the Screech-owl shrieks ; ungracious sound,  
I'll hear no more, it makes one's blood run chill.

BLAIR.

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IN the melancholy gloom of his dun-  
geon, Giraldus sat musing on his inau-  
spicious fate, bereft of every comfort,  
every hope, save that which arose from  
an unaccusing conscience. The partial  
gleam of his lamp shed a faint and me-  
lancholy

lancholy lustre, which only contributed to render the dreariness of the place more striking, whilst the distant parts of the vault, veiled in profound obscurity, left his imagination to explore the dark recess, and people it with the wild offspring of distracted fancy.

From the horrors of this situation he sought refuge in sleep, he sunk on his bed of straw, and lulled by weariness and sorrow, at length yielded to its oblivious influence; but the same cause which operated to give a temporary release from real affliction, had power likewise to pursue and torment him in this state of insensibility; horrid dreams crouded on his imagination in quick succession, each giving place to others still more dreadful.

He fancied himself at the foot of the pedestal in the court above, alone, and in total darkness, at length a dismal ruddy light seemed to overspread the heavens,

from whence a shower of blood descended, while pale blue lightnings darted round the horizon, and exhibited to his view scenes of horror too shocking to behold; mournful voices and howlings seemed to proceed from every side, a lady of majestic form, with a child in her hand crossed the court in haste, and bending low before him, earnestly sought his protection; he stooped to comfort her, when suddenly an unseen hand plunged a dagger to the child's heart, and the lady, with a scream that appalled his soul, sunk into the earth.

The violence of his agitation aroused him from sleep, but the horrors of his mind still seemed to continue a representation of the same dismal scenes he had beheld in his dream; ideal forms arose to his distracted sight, a skeleton traversed the dreary cell with solemn pace, and sunk away into the distant gloom; then a female figure seemed to glide with aerial lightness



lightness before him, while the fancied scream still resounded in his ear.

The state of his mind now became almost insupportable, he started up with a view of rousing himself and shaking off these imaginary terrors, when suddenly, by the dying wavering flame of his lamp, he beheld, with a distinctness too evident to be the effect of fancy, the figure of a man silently approaching the spot where he stood. The surprise he felt at this appearance deprived him for a few moments of the power of reflecting on the cause of it, he stood in dreadful uncertainty, anxiously awaiting some event, of which his scattered ideas could form no conception. But when returning recollection had chased away this momentary stupor, and reason had dispersed the cloud of ideal terrors which oppressed his mind, the first and most probable surmise he could form was, that this intruder had stole into his vault at the silent hour of midnight, with  
an

an intent to execute his bloody commission while he slept.

Impressed therefore with this idea, he sunk on his knee, and tearing open his waiscoat, exposed his unguarded breast to the expected blow. The stranger stood still, regarding him with an eye of apparent wonder. "Why do you hesitate?" cried Giralduſ, in a loud and hurried voice, "wherefore this delay—" "behold me prepared—I no longer ſhun my fate—I ſeek no pity—ſhew me none, but diſpatch thy bloody purpoſe quickly, and finiſh a life of miſery and wretchedneſs," he ceaſed, and the ſtranger ſeemed preparing to ſpeak, when a ſudden noiſe interrupted him, and at the ſame inſtant the wick of his lamp ſunk into its ſocket, and left him in total darkneſs. A death-like ſilence enſued, then haſty ſteps ſeemed advancing, and a faint glimmering light ſhot acroſs the diſtant part of the vault.

Giralduſ

Giraldus remained fixed in the same posture in which he had addressed the stranger, he knew not whether he was gone, but the same idea continued as to his intent, and sometimes he fancied he felt the point of a sword entering his breast; at length overcome with emotion he sunk on the earth, and in this position his guards, who soon after entered, found him.

They eagerly inquired the cause, and what voice it was they had heard, Giraldus made no reply, but waved his hand as if to rid himself of their inquiries, and at the same time cast his eyes around with a look so wild, that they began to think his senses were disordered.

As they could gain no information from him, they passed on, and opening a large door at the end of the vault entered a dark passage. In a few moments Giraldus was alarmed with loud screams, and immediately

immediately after saw his guards returning in wild affright; they scarcely took time to fasten the door, but crossing the vault with looks of horror and dismay, shut to the outer door with violence, and once more left him in total darkness and silence. The latter was not of long continuance, an alarm of a new nature soon took place. The clashing of swords was distinctly heard, deep groans succeeded, and in the intervals between the rude and boisterous voices of several men, one, in a plaintive tone, seemed supplicating for mercy.

Giraldus totally unable to comprehend the meaning of this, amidst a variety of conjectures would sometimes indulge a hope that Lord Albert had discovered the place of his confinement, and had now with his servants overpowered the guard; but the fallacy of this hope, which for a few moments had power to make his heart beat with eager expectation, soon became



became too evident—The door opened, and instead of Lord Albert and his deliverers, he beheld two men of fierce aspect enter, the first bore a light, and a sword yet dropping with blood, while the other dragged in a body frightfully mangled and bloody, which, after drawing to the middle of the vault, he threw from him with a horrid execration, then returned with his companion, and without perceiving Giralduſ, who ſtood in an obſcure part of the vault, ſhut to and faſtened the door.

The forlorn Giralduſ ſtood petrified with horror and amazement, his eyes wildly directed towards the door, as though he expected a repetition of the bloody ſcene ; for ſome time he preſerved the ſame poſture, then ſuddenly with frantic haſte flew to the high grated window, where his ſucceſſleſſ efforts to tear away the ſtrong bars that guarded it, brought him in ſome meaſure to his recollection

collection, he quitted it in despair, and threw himself on his straw.

Overwhelmed with such a train of complicated horrors, his mind was rendered incapable of separately dwelling on any, a dizzy confused consciousness of something inconceivably horrid, was all that in his present state he was capable of feeling. Nature fatigued and worn out at length yielded, he sunk into a deep sleep, from which, though tormented with frightful images, he did not awake till the morning's ray beamed through the grate of his window.

With a mind much calmed by his repose, Giraldus now arose, and drew near the body that had been brought in the preceding night; through the mangled countenance he thought he could discern some resemblance to one of his guards, and rightly conjectured that they had been met by a party of the banditti, on  
their

their return from the vault, who taking them for spies, had murdered this man ; the other, from the supplicating voice which he had heard, he had reason to suppose had been spared.

He now turned from the dismal object full of melancholy reflections on his own unhappy fate, " When," cried he, " will " this horrid confinement end, must my " life be prolonged only to witness such " scenes as these, and each succeeding " hour bring nothing but increasing calamity, surely I cannot long endure it, " nature herself will shortly render the " assassin's tardy sword unnecessary."

The greater part of the day passed, and no one appeared, he began to think he was entirely deserted, and determined to explore the dark passage from whence his guards had returned in such alarm ; but the door was fastened, and all his endeavours were ineffectual to discover  
the

the means; he was therefore compelled to relinquish his design. Towards the evening the two men whom he had before seen, entered the vault, and approaching the place where he stood, informed him that they were come to set him at liberty. "I have lately learned," said he who appeared to be the chief, "the reasons of your being confined here, and under such circumstances I think you cannot object to the proposal I am going to make; it is that you should join our party." Giraldus shuddered. "You may then," continued he without noticing it, "probably have an opportunity of revenging yourself on your enemies who have confined you here, and mean in the end to murder you; it will be your safest way likewise, for were we to set you free now, he has so many emissaries in this country, that he would soon get you within his power again. I would advise you therefore to consider well of this proposal, and  
 " let



“ let us know your determination by  
 “ twelve this evening, for then we leave  
 “ the castle; remember, that on these  
 “ terms only we liberate you; if you are  
 “ foolish enough to reject them, for our  
 “ own sakes—you understand me,” said  
 he pointing to the dead body “ these are  
 “ the methods we take to prevent bab-  
 “ bling.” Then after again exhorting  
 him to consider well of it, he, with his  
 companion left the vault. Giraldus made  
 no reply; he was deeply intent on weigh-  
 ing well the circumstances on both sides,  
 the choice of life or death was now be-  
 fore him; not that he, for a moment,  
 placed the latter in competition with a  
 life of rapine and bloodshed, his soul  
 shrunk from the very idea, but he was  
 earnestly contriving, through the means  
 that had been pointed out to him, to ef-  
 fect his escape. He well knew the watch-  
 ful jealousy of these people to one just  
 admitted into their society, that the bond  
 which cemented them together, was hu-  
 man

man blood, and that therefore they made a practice of compelling their young members to imbrue their hands therein as soon as possible, for 'till that was effected, they considered him as one in whom it would not be prudent or safe to place any confidence.

Of this he had certain information, but he considered, that without undergoing this horrid initiation, he might find a time to elude their watchfulness, to which their night excursions would doubtless prove extremely favourable; but should he not, his state would then be precisely the same as it was now, for he was firmly determined, should chance throw some unhappy person in their way, whose murder was to seal their union, to turn the arms they might give him in defence of the intended victim, and by sacrificing his own life, have a chance at least, of ridding the country of one, perhaps more, of these ferocious monsters;

added

added to this, he hoped to gain some information of the person by whose commands he had been seized and confined in this place; the principal of the banditti, by his own account, was acquainted with it, and would probably divulge it to him as soon as he entered into their society.

When he reconsidered all these circumstances, he became better pleased with his determination than he had at first been, the prospect of his escape, together with the knowledge he should acquire of his persecutor, whose wiles he could then if necessary, more effectually guard against, contributed to bring back that hope, which had before entirely deserted him; his mind became more easy and calm, and the clouds of his fate seemed to break and disperse in his view.

Such is the fallacy of human foresight; we form hasty conclusions from the apparent direction of fate, and when its course changes from the point we had in view,  
our

our anticipations still fly before to one equally remote from that to which it ultimately tends.

Pleased with the prospect now before him, Giraldus turned his thoughts to the events of the last evening; the circumstance which dwelt most upon his mind, and which yet remained entirely unaccounted for, was the appearance of the stranger to whom he had addressed himself; he could call back no recollection of his entrance or exit, and was rather inclined to believe it the effect of a distracted imagination; but when he called to mind the terror with which his guards had returned, he was plunged still deeper in doubt and uncertainty. "Surely," said he, "they could not be deceived if I was, nor should I suppose that two men armed as they were, would fly in such terror from a single person; doubtless then it must have been a supernatural appearance. Alas, I fear this



“ this cavern has witnessed more than a  
 “ single murder.”

The gloom of evening had spread itself over the vault, a faint glow however still beamed through the grate of his window, all was silent, and the time and place seemed appropriated to such reflections as now occupied the mind of Giraldus, he felt a secret horror steal upon his heart, and creep through his frame, he began to relapse into the terrors of the preceding evening, and earnestly wished for the re-entrance of some of the banditti, to relieve his mind from the superstitious dread that oppressed it.

He did not long remain ere this wish was gratified, one of the party came with a light, and as it afterwards appeared, with an intention if possible to prevail with him to accept the offer of their captain. To this end he began an harangue  
 on

on the pleasures and freedom of their lives, which he endeavoured to set forth with a variety of descriptions, very ill calculated to forward his purpose, with a person who boasted the least remains of feeling or humanity; but Giraldus saved him the trouble of going into a minute detail, for which he seemed prepared, by informing him of his determination to accept it.

Surprised and pleased at this ready acquiescence, which he attributed solely to his own rhetorical powers, he shook him heartily by the hand, telling him he would go immediately and inform their party. He soon returned with the captain's desire that he would accompany them to supper, in order that he might be better prepared for a secret expedition on which it was meant they should proceed at twelve o'clock.

"You must know," said the man,  
who

who led the way, " that the other fellow  
 " who guarded you, and whose life we  
 " spared on condition that he would enter  
 " into our troop, has contrived to make  
 " his escape this morning, through the  
 " negligence of the watch, while we  
 " were sleeping. Our captain was in the  
 " devil of a passion, for it will hinder our  
 " staying here the time we intended ; but  
 " your agreeing to take his place has  
 " brought him into good humour again.  
 " I'll assure you he has a very high opi-  
 " nion of you, and says he will be bound  
 " for it, you will make as fine a fellow as  
 " any in the troop, and will fully recom-  
 " pence us for the loss of the other ; by  
 " the bye, he is a marked man, he must  
 " be quick in his motions, for we shall  
 " not give him much time to betray us."

They were now arrived at the end of  
 a long vaulted passage that terminated  
 without any appearance of a door, Giral-  
 dus stared at his conductor, " Where are

“you leading me?” said he, the other smiled, and applying his mouth to a small hole in the wall, pronounced in a low voice a certain watch-word. Immediately a large flag rose up, and from the opening such a smook and steam came forth, that Giraldus almost fancied himself at the entrance of the infernal regions. “In the name of heaven,” he cried, as his conductor began to descend, “where are we going?” “Come, come,” he replied, “away with this nonsense, our apartment has a rough entrance, but it is comfortable enough when you are in.” They descended some steps and the flag closed after them, without any apparent cause; a short passage brought them to a door, which was opened to the same watch-word that had been given above, and displayed a spacious vault to their view.

Here round a large table sat eight wretches, whose ferocious countenances well



well betokened the nature of their employment; some provisions lay on the table, various arms depended from the top of the vault, and at the farther end a large fire blazed, the smoke from which, overcharging the small chasm formed for its exit, diffused itself throughout the vault, and rendered its appearance still more gloomy and infernal.

Immediately on his entrance the troop arose to congratulate him on the wisdom, as they termed it, of his choice; each seemed eager to welcome him, while Giralduš shrunk with horror from the gripe of hands polluted and stained with blood. The captain now seated him by himself at the upper end of the table, the coarse repast was then begun with all the voraciousness of savage nature, and Giralduš, whose whole sustenance since the preceding day, had been a small crust with a little water that had remained in his pitcher, yielded to the calls of hunger,

and made a hearty meal in spite of all the disgusting circumstances of his situation.

Rude and boisterous mirth succeeded the repast, and frequent jokes were passed on the delicacy of their new companion's appearance. "I'll warrant," said one, "when he has served two or three campaigns, he will have changed that white-wash for a good brown; don't you remember captain, when poor Rowland entered among us, what a poor puny looking mortal it was; but by the time he had served five years, there was not a stouter fellow in the whole troop, nor one that dyed the red-rag oftener than he—poor fellow, he did not get the better of that cut in his arm, which was given by that milk-sop—but I did his business completely for it. Ned," added he, "what did you do with his carcass?" "I tumbled it down the well," replied the other, "to help

“ help him on his journey to the world  
“ below.”

When the laugh, which this piece of wit excited, had ceased, the captain addressed Giraldus, who in the person above described, recognized his friend, Lord Albert ; “ You have agreed I understand,” said he, “ to enter into our troop, and I doubt not will soon become a zealous member, you may perhaps meet with some things in this new way of life, which not being accustomed to, may appear disagreeable at first—but never fear it will soon wear away ; we often remark that he who appears most backward in the beginning is generally the forwardest in the end ; we live by the sword, and ’tis not for us to affect fine feelings, that which would shock others is indifferent to us, robbery is our trade, and murder the means we employ to ensure secrecy. For yourself, remember, that he who

“ attempts to fly we punish with death ;  
 “ should the oldest member of the troop,  
 “ so far forget what is due to himself and  
 “ companions, as to endeavour to desert  
 “ us in the moment of danger, we should  
 “ immediately glut our vengeance in his  
 “ blood, and consider his name and me-  
 “ mory as infamous. You see, therefore,  
 “ that the bond which unites us is fide-  
 “ lity, and you know the punishment of  
 “ its violation—be faithful—and when  
 “ you have undergone the term of your  
 “ probation, you will be made acquaint-  
 “ ed with some secrets which I have lately  
 “ learned, as well as with those that re-  
 “ late to this vault. This night is de-  
 “ voted to a secret expedition, of which  
 “ it will at present be unnecessary to give  
 “ you the particulars.”

The captain concluded, and the ban-  
 ditti arose to arm ; some were furnished  
 with swords and battle-axes, and others  
 with cross-bows ; they then led the way  
 to



to the upper court, and repaired to a stable which they had formed among the ruins, where mounting their horses, they proceeded through the gateway of the castle.

Giraldus rode between two of the foremost of the party, and could frequently observe by the clouded moonlight, the jealous vigilance of his companions; they proceeded on, in total silence, across the heath; then entered a private road, in which they continued to travel 'till they arrived at the gate of a large antique castle. The captain here ranging his men in a small coppice opposite, held a short conversation with two or three of the principal, then alighted and directed them to remain where they were 'till a signal agreed on; he went forward, and giving a smart whistle, the gate of the castle was immediately thrown open, but scarcely had he time to advance another step,

G 4

when

when an arrow from a cross-bow laid him dead on the earth.

The banditti seeing their captain fall, issued with fury from their hiding place, and attacking two who appeared first at the gateway, instantly sacrificed them; but a shower of arrows and stones from the walls of the castle, left them no cause to boast; three of the troop fell, and two more were much wounded; the rest perceiving they had been betrayed, and the superiority of the enemy, set spurs to their horses and fled, but with such coolness and order, that Giraldus could find no opportunity to elude their vigilance.

They now with heavy hearts, returned to the Castle of Hardayne, and to the great surprise of Giraldus, conveyed him to the vault in which he had been first confined, where, without speaking they left him, and fastened the door. Whether this proceeded from his having been observed

observed to meditate his escape, or from want of confidence, he could not tell, but he felt no great sorrow in being left to himself; he had already, he thought, been too much in their company.

The two who were wounded, seemed when they arrived to be extremely faint, and he much doubted whether, with the poor assistance they could afford each other, it would be possible for them to recover; thus then had this successful expedition terminated a career, that had been long marked with desolation and bloodshed.

The morning was advancing, when the sound of horses hoofs, and the voices of a large party of men, were heard at intervals in the court above. Giraldus started from the slumber into which he had fallen, and listened attentively; at times he saw the light of torches gleam through his window, but could gain no sight of

any thing that might lead to a knowledge of the purpose for which this party were arrived. The most probable conjecture he could form, was, that they were those with whom the banditti had been lately engaged, and who had now pursued the remains of them to their secret haunt. This supposition was further confirmed by the indistinct noise of a distant scuffle, which he shortly after heard, and he felt happy that they had placed him where he was, as he might otherwise have fallen an innocent victim, or been condemned to an ignominious death.

In about an hour he heard the departure of the horses, he endeavoured to make himself heard, but it was in vain, and his heart died within him when he reflected that he was now probably abandoned to starve in this dungeon; but his fears on that head were soon removed by the entrance of two men, in one of whom he discovered to his surprise, the man who had



had before guarded him, and who had escaped from the banditti on the preceding morning.

Though the sight of these persons convinced him he was again a prisoner, yet he felt far more satisfaction in falling under their power, than he had in that of the banditti, with whom the hope of effecting his escape had alone induced him to associate. The men now came forward with inquiries if he had seen any of the banditti, and how they had behaved to him, but Giraldus was extremely laconic in his answers, and gave them little information; they then asked if he knew what had been done with the body of their companion, he pointed to the place—the light of the torch gleamed on it as they turned round, and displayed the bloody object to their view; they shuddered as they beheld it, and soon turned from the dismal spectacle; Giraldus now earnestly requested them to inform

form him of the cause of his confinement, but they were deaf to all his entreaties, and only acquainted him that they were to leave the castle in the evening.

The day soon dawned, and passed on without any occurrence; he had leisure to give full scope to his imagination on the information which had been given respecting his removal, but the conduct of the person by whose orders he had been confined, seemed altogether so capricious, that he only involved himself in deeper perplexity, in endeavouring to unravel a mystery that appeared quite inexplicable; if murder was their intention, no place seemed better adapted for it than that in which he was confined; if imprisonment only, the place equally suited that purpose, and since the banditti had been overcome, they had no cause of dread from that quarter; which ever way he considered it, he could perceive no rational motives for their conduct, but the whole  
together

together was dark and mysterious, and eluded every effort of his imagination.

The evening now approached, a gloomy lowering sky quickly shut in the day, and tempestuous winds howled through the hollow resounding vaults, the idea of murder which before had escaped him, now forcibly struck his mind, "Perhaps" said he, "that is their intention, that accomplished, they quit this place—" "doubtless it must be so, this night must terminate my wretched life." Impressed with this idea he awaited their arrival with some degree of resignation, though not unmixed with horror and dismay.

At length the door opened, the men came forward, seized him, and bound his arms, then left him in this state of anxiety for several minutes; at their return they led him through the vaults to the courtyard, and mounting him on horseback  
before

before one of them, rode off with speed from the castle.

Again deceived in his surmises, he banished conjecture from his mind, and let his future fate be what it might, determined no more by anticipations of good or evil, to disturb his breast; on the one hand with the painful sensations excited by despair, or on the other with those which proceeded from disappointed hope.

They continued travelling at a quick pace during the remainder of the night, and when the morning's light dawned from the clouded east, Giraldus discovered that their route lay towards the sea-coast, which the rising ground just then exhibited to his view; the remains of a watch-tower, that seemed long to have withstood the beating of the surge, now evidently appeared to be the place of their destination, and a short time brought them to this desolate mansion. On their arrival



arrival, three men in the habits of sailors came forth and assisted them to alight, they unbound the arms of Giraldus, and conveyed him into an inner apartment, where, after setting some provisions on the table, they left him.

Weary from his journey and want of rest, he scarcely touched what was before him, but throwing himself on a miserable bed that lay in one corner, fell into a profound sleep. On awaking he was greatly surprised to find himself on board a small vessel; he started up, and went on deck, and could perceive by the distance of the land, that they had set sail a considerable time; the men who had accompanied him from the castle, with two sailors, were all that were on board.

He now renewed his entreaties to the former, to be made acquainted with their designs, and the place of their destination, but they paid no regard to his questions,  
and

and only informed him, that he would see by the next day; finding he could gain no information, he again retired to meditate alone on his strange and untoward fate.

Towards the close of the evening the wind increased, and the seamen predicted an approaching storm; alarmed at this intelligence, his guards began to display evident marks of consternation, and their terrors increased with the agitation of the vessel. They now wished to return, but from the direction of the wind, that was not possible. The storm continued to increase to a degree of violence, every one was now called forth to assist at the moment of danger, but little was the assistance their fears and sickness would permit them to give; they soon retired below, and Giraldus alone continued to aid the seamen, who with many execrations, endeavoured to draw forth the other two from their lurking place.

The

The little sail which they still carried was quickly rent in tatters ; hopeless, and spent with fatigue, they now suffered the vessel to drive at the mercy of the storm ; frequent heavy seas broke over her, and the danger of foundering became every moment greater ; thus passed a long and tedious night.

The wild waste of waters which the morning's light displayed, would of itself have been an object of pleasure, when compared with that dreadful one which now presented itself to their view ; a high rocky island on which the surf broke with a hollow thundering sound, appeared immediately under their lee, towards this the vessel drove with a velocity it was impossible to check or prevent.

All was now given up for lost, a few moments only intervened, and inevitable death awaited them ; horror, confusion, and dismay, were depicted on the countenances

tenances of the guards, and with tears they deplored the fatal task they had undertaken ; the sailors expected the shock that should overwhelm them with more manly fortitude, attentive to the last, to every possible means of preservation. While Giralduſ, raising his eyes to heaven, uttered a ſhort and fervent ejaculation, imploring mercy and forgiveness on himſelf and unhappy companions ; his thoughts would have returned to his friends, but ſuddenly the veſſel was daſhed on a ſunken rock, and one huge overwhelming wave buried it with all it contained deep in the ſtormy abyſs.

CHAP.



## CHAP. VII.

---

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,  
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,  
Raze out the written troubles of the brain;  
And, with some sweet oblivious antidote,  
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff,  
Which weighs upon the heart ?

SHAKESPEAR.

---

WHEN Lord Albert arrived at the castle of Melbourne, he found his father just recovering from a severe indisposition; the joy that the Earl felt at the return of his son, seemed to dissipate the lingering

lingering remains of his disorder, by removing from his breast that painful weight of apprehension by which it had been oppressed.

The Earl was a man of impetuous passions, which on no occasion he endeavoured to curb ; impatient under affliction, and incapable of bearing up against the shock of misfortune ; when therefore he first received the intelligence of his son's having fallen into the hands of the banditti, he yielded himself to all the violence of grief and despair ; he saw his only child, the heir of his extensive estates, torn from him in the prime of life ; and vengeance mingled with the unbounded affliction that filled his breast. The resolution which he had taken of exterminating the banditti, was prevented however from being carried into execution, by a fever, the consequence of his violent emotion, and the intelligence which  
the

the peasant's son soon after brought, entirely set it aside.

Scarcely was he recovering from this illness, when a servant brought him the news of Lord Albert's second disaster, his rage now seemed if possible to exceed the grief he had before felt; he became quite frantic, and had any weapon been at hand, would instantly have sacrificed the man who gave the information: his agitation of course heightened his disorder, till his life was despaired of, but the strength of his constitution once more saved him.

The return of a son therefore on whose fate his own seemed to hang, and whom he had deplored as inevitably lost, filled his breast with transport, and his joy became as immoderate as his sorrow had been before. When this had in some measure subsided, he desired his son to give him a particular account of the  
manner

manner of his escape, as that which he had received from his servants, was very imperfect.

Lord Albert accordingly informed him of the circumstances in which he had been found by Giraldus, while, with all the warmth of friendship, he expatiated on the kind assistance which he had received from him. "And where," said the Earl, "is your friend? I think I requested him to accompany you home." "Alas, sir," replied the son, "to his acceptance of that request, I have to attribute his loss, he was carried off by the banditti on that fatal evening; where, or with what intent, heaven only knows, too probably with that of murder.

The Earl expressed the greatest sorrow, and when Lord Albert related the further occurrences which had taken place at the castle, with the attempt that had been



been made on his life, he became thoughtful, and seemed somewhat agitated, this however soon passed off, and the discourse took an indifferent turn.

The next morning when the servants had retired, the Earl renewed the conversation. "My son," said he, "the circumstances which you related to me last night have involved me in some perplexity, did this young man ever give you any particulars of his life?" "He did," replied Lord Albert, "and if you please I can relate them to you." The Earl nodded assent, and he proceeded to inform him of the principal events of his history, purposely omitting whatever related to Elvina, and attributing his parting from his uncle to some trifling dispute between them.

"I have been thus particular in my inquiries," said the Earl, when his son

son had concluded, " because some ap-  
 " prehension had arisen in my mind that  
 " the assassin had mistaken his object.  
 " A young man bred up like your friend  
 " in the middle station of life, such as you  
 " have described his to be, could never,  
 " unknown to himself, occasion such vio-  
 " lent enmity, could never excite that ran-  
 " cour and malice which would pursue  
 " him to destruction, without being some-  
 " way apprised of the cause; nor is it pro-  
 " bable such means would have been em-  
 " ployed to take away the life of a person  
 " who might only have given a casual of-  
 " fence; something of a far more important  
 " nature must have given rise to such a  
 " conduct, and some person in a higher  
 " sphere could alone render himself ob-  
 " noxious to such dark and wary pro-  
 " ceedings.

" But the circumstance that first  
 " struck me, was the partial information  
 " which the man gave at his death; the  
 " words

“ words which he uttered, have dwelt  
 “ on my mind ever since you related  
 “ them, and have unfolded to my view,  
 “ beyond the possibility of a doubt, the  
 “ knowledge of a transaction which might  
 “ otherwise have been for ever hid from  
 “ me.”

“ Listen then, and judge whether  
 “ my surmises are not too probable,  
 “ whether you yourself were not the per-  
 “ son devoted to destruction, and whe-  
 “ ther the succeeding attempt on yourself  
 “ and friend was not a part of the same  
 “ sanguinary plan which had been before  
 “ adopted.”

“ At the time of your mother’s death,  
 “ which happened when you were about  
 “ four years old, my brother paid me a  
 “ visit of condolance, and he remained  
 “ with me till time had in some measure  
 “ removed the affliction which my loss  
 “ had occasioned. During this interval

VOL. I.

H

“ I had

" I had frequent opportunities of observ-  
 " ing that his heart was oppressed by con-  
 " cealed sorrow, he frequently sighed  
 " deeply, and would sometimes remain  
 " for hours alone in his chamber; I saw  
 " with deep concern this dejection in-  
 " crease, and at length took an opportu-  
 " nity of speaking to him on the subject.  
 " For some time he denied that any  
 " thing troubled him, but at length per-  
 " ceiving it was in vain to dissemble, he  
 " took me out with him, and thus ad-  
 " dressed me.

" My dear brother, I find it is impossible  
 " to conceal my afflictions from you, they  
 " are perhaps heavier than you imagined,  
 " and I did intend to have buried them for  
 " ever in my own breast; but I will relate  
 " the circumstances merely to convince you  
 " how surely my happiness is for ever lost.

" About two years ago, I saw the  
 " daughter of the Earl of Morden, of her  
 " beauty



“ beauty and accomplishments it is unne-  
 “ cessary to inform you, you have wit-  
 “ nessed them, and will therefore the less  
 “ wonder, if at first beholding her I lost  
 “ that liberty of which I had so often  
 “ boasted, and felt my future happiness  
 “ was entirely within her power.

“ By the assistance of a friend, I was  
 “ soon introduced, and after some fur-  
 “ ther intimacy, had the pleasure to see  
 “ that I was not wholly indifferent to  
 “ her; elated with this discovery, which a  
 “ trifling incident had occasioned, I soon  
 “ after made a tender of my hand and for-  
 “ tune, and had the supreme felicity of hear-  
 “ ing from her, an acceptance of my offers.

“ Preparations were accordingly made,  
 a month was fixed for the time of our  
 “ marriage, and I foolishly thought that  
 “ fate itself could scarcely prevent the ac-  
 “ complishment of all my wishes; a fort-  
 “ night of this time was elapsed, when the

“ king sent for me, some business of the  
 “ utmost consequence at a foreign court  
 “ which he intrusted to my care, com-  
 “ pelled me to leave the kingdom imme-  
 “ diately ; I took a hasty leave of the  
 “ mistress of my affections, and we vowed  
 “ eternal constancy to each other.

“ Slow indeed passed the two tedious  
 “ months of my absence ; but my com-  
 “ mission executed, I flew on the wings  
 “ of impatient love, once more to meet  
 “ the idol of my soul, and render the  
 “ bonds of our union indissoluble.

“ But can I describe the emotions that  
 “ rent my heart, when at my return I  
 “ found she had yielded her wavering af-  
 “ fections to a young man with whom she  
 “ had become acquainted since my de-  
 “ parture ; in the bitterness of my soul I  
 “ upbraided her with her inconstancy,  
 “ but she only smiled at my vehemence ;  
 “ rendered doubly furious by this insult-  
 “ ing

"ing indifference, I sought out the object  
 "of my wrongs, and satiated my ven-  
 "gence in his blood. Since that time,"  
 continued my brother, "I have not  
 "known peace; her image haunts me  
 "wherever I fly, and vainly do I endea-  
 "vour to tear it from my heart; neither  
 "distance nor time have aught availed,  
 "and death alone holds out the means of  
 "calming the tumults of my soul."

"He finished, and in vain did I en-  
 "deavour to divert his mind from the  
 "gloom that had overspread it, during  
 "the remainder of the time he stayed  
 "with me he appeared to grow worse,  
 "and at length in restless anxiety he  
 "quitted me abruptly.

"From that time I have received no  
 "intelligence of him, nor have any of  
 "his friends been able to give me the  
 "least information. The inquiry and  
 "search which I shortly after instituted  
 "were

“ were not more successful, and every  
 “ scheme I could devise to trace his  
 “ course from the castle, proved equally  
 “ abortive. ”

“ I was frequently led to believe that  
 “ the friends of the young man whom he  
 “ had sacrificed to his resentment, had  
 “ found means, in revenge, to way-lay  
 “ and assassinate him ; this was only pro-  
 “ bable conjecture, I could gain no proofs,  
 “ and at length determined to have a  
 “ personal interview with them on the  
 “ subject. His brother whom I waited  
 “ on received me with great coldness, I  
 “ made known to him the purport of my  
 “ visit, but he vehemently denied all  
 “ knowledge of him, and added some  
 “ aspersions which I was compelled to  
 “ notice ; high words succeeded, which  
 “ terminated in a challenge—we fought,  
 “ and I left him dangerously wounded. ”

“ Since then I have met with nothing  
 “ to



“ to remove or confirm my suspicions,  
 “ till the recent circumstance at the Cas-  
 “ tle of Hardayne, nor do I now hesitate  
 “ to believe, that the person said to have  
 “ been murdered there was my unfortu-  
 “ nate, long lost brother. Greatly in-  
 “ deed do I lament that he had not the  
 “ power to divulge the whole, justice  
 “ would then have taken place on his  
 “ enemies, and your friend been preserved  
 “ from their subsequent machinations;  
 “ but the time may shortly arrive, my  
 “ son, when you shall have an opportu-  
 “ nity of revenging all our wrongs ; wait  
 “ with patience and providence will direct  
 “ the means.

Lord Albert listened attentively to his  
 father's story, and while he lamented the  
 fate of his uncle, he felt the probabi-  
 lity, that the circumstances attending his  
 death had been thus unexpectedly deve-  
 loped.

H 4 “ And

"And my friend," said he, "how has  
 "he borne the brunt of all the shafts  
 "that were levelled at me. To him I  
 "owe my life, and the only recompence  
 "he receives in return is the accumula-  
 "tion of my misfortunes upon him; un-  
 "fortunate indeed for him was the hour  
 "that led him to preserve me from im-  
 "pending death, alas I fear his life must  
 "atone for the generous act." The Earl  
 seemed to feel the distress of his son, he  
 spoke some words of consolation, and  
 they parted for the morning.

The castle of Melbourne was situated  
 in the bosom of a forest, through which  
 some formal avenues opened to prospect  
 of the distant country. The mansion  
 was antique and venerable, though heavy  
 and gloomy.

The Earl of Glenderwen from some  
 cause of disgust, had retired thither near  
 twenty years; the death of his lady which  
 happened

happened shortly after, contributed to throw a gloom on a disposition naturally impetuous, haughty, and impatient. The recluse life which he afterwards followed seemed a consequence of his loss, and seldom did his excursions exceed the boundaries of his domains.

Yet with some friends he would at times unbend the severity of his manners, and yield himself up to social pleasures, but his hilarity constantly sunk into fixed gloom at their departure. His son alone had power to restrain the impetuosity of his passions, which would from trifling causes frequently break forth; he looked up to him as the future support of his name, all his happiness seemed centered in him, and all his views tended only to his aggrandizement.

Nor was the object of his parental care unworthy of the solicitude which was ever displayed in his behalf; brave, ge-

nerous, sincere in friendship, and amiable in his manners, with a heart ever open to the distresses of others, he was the admiration of the small circle of acquaintance which his retired life had enabled him to form. He saw with sorrow the habitual gloom of his father's disposition, and for a while strove by every method he could devise to draw him to some cheerful pursuit; but the success of his efforts was only temporary, and he was at length obliged to yield to what he saw habit had rendered it impossible to overcome.

Such was the Earl of Glenderwen, and such his son; it is not to be wondered at therefore, when the intelligence of his dangerous state first reached his ears, that the effect on such a mind, unused to sustain the shocks of misfortune, was violent in the extreme, it brought him, as was before observed, to the brink of the grave.

With his recovery Lord Albert had  
drawn



drawn in a poison that was not likely to be soon eradicated, the charms of Elvina had made a deeper impression on his heart than he at first imagined. No sooner had he quitted her, than he forcibly felt in spite of all the efforts of philosophy, how weak argument and reason are when opposed to passion; he was restless and uneasy, in vain he sought comfort from those amusements which had formerly given him pleasure and delight, they were now tasteless and insipid, and he quitted them in disgust.

A murmuring stream, by which the deeply shading woods yielded a gloomy path, was now become his favourite haunt, there would he stray, vainly hoping in solitude and retirement to overcome his hopeless passion.

Such scenes suit not with the stricken heart; in solitude, recollection paints with glowing colours those circumstances of pleasure

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pleasure on which we delight to dwell, or melancholy brooding over past sorrows gives double energy to their action. The bustle of life seems alone calculated to yield relief; the quick successive changes of scenes and circumstances imperceptibly draw off the attention, from that on which retirement invariably fixes it; but the lover like the sick patient, detests the medicine which alone can give him ease.

This Lord Albert perceived, and he determined at length to pursue some more efficacious plan; he forced himself once more to join in those sylvan amusements which had been formerly wont to give him delight, and their influence was soon felt on his heart.

Returning one day from his usual occupations, he was met at the gate of the castle by the peasant's son Robin—pleased and surprised at the sight of him, he eagerly inquired what event had brought him



him there, and received in answer an account of the state in which he had seen Giraldus, of the treatment he had received from the men who were carrying him away, and his apprehensions that they had conveyed him to the castle; he further added, that he should have brought the intelligence sooner, but had been so much hurt in his attempts to rescue him, that he had been obliged for a time to keep his bed, and was now but just recovering.

Lord Albert while he commiserated the sufferings of the poor peasant, amply rewarded him for his courage and fidelity, he took him to the castle with him, musing on the way on the intelligence he had just received. This discovery he concluded might lead the way to that of the place of his friends concealment; he indulged the hope that he might yet remain alive, and that he should have

have an opportunity of rescuing him from the hands of his enemies.

Elated with this idea, he determined immediately to solicit his father's permission to go in quest of his friend; he accordingly repaired to his room, and made him acquainted with what he had just learned. The Earl seemed pleased at the information, and ordered the peasant to be brought before him; he examined him particularly on the appearance of the two men, and asked whether he thought he had ever seen them before. Robin replied, he had not, nor did he know whether he should know them, were he to see them again, for he was too busily engaged to take any particular notice of their persons.

After pausing some time. "You see" said the Earl, turning to his son, "it is just as I supposed; had the object of these men been plunder, they would  
" ont

"not have taken the trouble to convey  
 "your friend to so distant a place as the  
 "the castle, the design has evidently  
 "been what I before hinted to you;  
 "but still I think it will be useless to  
 "to seek him there; you may be sure  
 "they would not remain this length of  
 "time, particularly when they knew their  
 "route had been discovered by this  
 "young man."—"They left me for  
 "dead, though," interrupted the pea-  
 "sant. "True my friend," replied the  
 "Earl, "but that would not be any very  
 "strong inducement for them to pro-  
 "long their stay at the castle.—Besides,"  
 "he continued, "you should remember  
 "the danger you so lately escaped there  
 "from the banditti." "Oh, as to the  
 "banditti," again interrupted the pea-  
 "sant, "there is an end of them, as a  
 "body may say, for they went and at-  
 "tacked a gentleman's castle, and seve-  
 "ral of them got killed there, and then  
 "as they were coming back they were  
 "met

"met by another party, who killed and  
 "took them all prisoners."

Lord Albert took advantage of this piece of information again to press his suit, he urged the probability of at least meeting with some circumstance that might develop the uncertain fate of his friend, and pleaded the weight of obligation under which he lay, to exert every possible means in his power to discover and save him, before it should be too late, if that indeed were not already the case.

Overcome with his solicitations the Earl at length yielded his consent, and nominated the succeeding day to commence the expedition: the joy of the peasant proved how greatly he was interested in this acquiescence, and how sincerely he was attached to the person and cause of the unfortunate Giraldus.

Preparations



Preparations were accordingly made for their departure, and a sufficient number of servants, well armed to suit any exigence, were appointed to go with them. The satisfaction which arose from the gratification of his wishes, Lord Albert mistook for a presentiment of success; all impossibilities had vanished, or been changed to probable possibilities, and the intervening time now seemed the only obstacle to the attainment of the object of his pursuit.

When he reflected how much he should by his endeavours excite the gratitude of the gentle Elvina, by allaying in her breast the painful uncertainty of a dreaded event, a new source of pleasure became open to him, and he determined to make the castle of the Baron St. Austin in his way, that he might participate with her the satisfaction to which his sanguine imagination had given birth:

The

The Earl, when in the evening he parted from his son, cautioned him to be at all times strictly on his guard against the machinations of his enemies; who, he observed, would not fail, when they discovered their error, to use all the means in their power to rectify it: in the mean time he promised to pursue such measures as would most probably bring this dark conspiracy to light, and drag forth the authors of it from their secret abode.

As soon as the dawning light appeared, Lord Albert arose, the servants awaited him in the court, where, quickly mounting their horses, they led the way thro' the woods, and bent their course towards the castle of the Baron. The gradually increasing light now swept away the blue obscurity from the eastern mountains, and overspread them with the roseate tints of morning; the dew-drops glittered on the leaves of the forest, while the  
birds

birds warbled in extacy beneath their branches. All nature seemed in harmony—Lord Albert felt the genial influence on his heart, his whole soul seemed expanded, every disquietude had fled, and hope, and joy, and pleasure, accompanied his steps.

# CHAP.

## CHAP. VIII.

---

But ah ! how stillness slept upon the ground,  
How mute attention check'd each rising sound ;  
Scarce stole a breeze, to wave the leafy spray.

MASON.

---

IN the short time which Lord Albert had remained at the castle of the Baron St. Austin, Elvina had seen enough of his character to admire the noble disinterestedness which ever actuated his conduct ; the same moment that discovered to her the passion she had inspired, convinced her



her of the generous motives to which he had sacrificed it. She was conscious of all, and felt all the esteem due to such exalted principles; but her love was fixed and immutable, and her heart revolted from the idea of transferring its affections to another object, however worthy or amiable. On the other hand Lord Albert pursued the object of his expedition without one selfish consideration arising, to destroy what hope had inspired; though aware, should his endeavours be crowned with success, it must for ever do away the probability that time might effect a change in the sentiments of Elvina, he yielded to the benign influence of gratitude and friendship, and only sought an opportunity of displaying his love, by contributing whatever might yield pleasure to the object of it.

His reception at the castle was marked with sincere pleasure, and proved how highly he was esteemed by its worthy inhabitants;

inhabitants; he saw with deep regret the pale cheek and languid air of Elvina, and silently vowed to devote himself to the removal of the cause, if fate yet held out a possibility. He now communicated his intentions to the Baron, informing him of the means by which he had gained his intelligence, and of those he meant to pursue.

The Baron, who loved Giraldus with a degree of affection little short of that which he bore to his own son, felt sincere pleasure at this intelligence; he listened attentively while Lord Albert recited with all the warmth of admiration, the generous exertions of the peasant, and the ill treatment he had in consequence received; nor was this story lost on Elvina, she soon left the room to seek an opportunity of seeing and rewarding him for a conduct so generous.

Once more she felt hope revive in her heart,

heart, and she yielded to its influence; the probability of his yet remaining alive, since she found he had not fallen into the hands of the banditti, became every moment stronger, and she persuaded herself that the cruelty or revenge of those in whose power he was, could not extend beyond imprisonment. The Baron entertained similar ideas, and Lord Albert, in endeavouring to raise their hopes, found he had considerably augmented his own.

The purport of his visit thus attained, he quitted his friends and pursued his journey, accompanied with their fervent wishes for the success of his expedition. Towards the evening he arrived at the beacon, where the honest peasant welcomed him with every mark of joy. Eager to pursue his search he scarcely stopped a moment, but ordering some of his attendants to procure lights, proceeded to the castle.

The

The sun was just setting when they entered the court-yard—all was hushed in peace—no sounds but the hollow echoes of their horses' feet, struck their ears, and the appearance of entire desertion reigned throughout. As they had no time to lose they first searched all the more habitable parts, but without discovering the least trace of their having been lately occupied; they therefore, after lighting their torches proceeded down to the vaults. After a long search, chance directed them to the passage which led to the vault, that had been made the secret residence of the banditti; the trap-door was open, but the aspect of the place had something so horrible that the men seemed unwilling to enter; they stood looking at each other in some dismay, 'till Lord Albert perceiving their terrors, seized the light from one of them, and drawing his sword, descended the narrow stairs.

The dismal gloom of the dungeon,  
with



with the bodies that lay bathed in blood, was a spectacle too shocking to dwell on, he examined the faces of the dead with a palpitating heart, least among them he should discern the countenance of Giraldus, but the expression which they still bore soon removed his fears. From this horrid scene he hurried away, and sought in the more distant vaults those traces that might discover to him the fate of his friend.

At length he came to that wherein Giraldus had been confined, the straw which had formed his bed, the security of the doors and window, evidently pointed out the purpose to which it had been applied; but it is impossible to describe the horror of his mind, when by the light of their torches the servants discovered that the floor had been recently stained with blood. He stood for some moments freezed to the spot, then cast his eyes wildly around for the mangled object

which his imagination had pourtrayed, but meeting with nothing that might confirm his apprehensions, he gave a deep sigh and sunk on the ground.

His attendants immediately took him up to the court-yard, where in a short time the fresh air revived him. On the recovery of his senses, he once more, in spite of the entreaties of his servants to the contrary, descended to the vault; he eagerly sought the distant parts of it, and soon discovered the object that had caused such alarm; but had the friend whom he sought, at that moment stood living before him, he could scarcely have felt greater pleasure than he did, when in the pale corps he beheld a person totally different from the object of his search. His present apprehensions being thus done away, he at length yielded to the urgent solicitations of his servants, and agreed to return to the beacon.

It

It was now quite dark, the gleam of the torches partially illuminated the ruined buildings, the batts, attracted by the light, fluttered round them, while the larger birds disturbed by the noise, quitted in coveys their ivyed concealments, and made the court re-echo to their harsh screams. To Lord Albert the effect was grand and striking, and while he stood viewing the rude desolation, it called to his imagination the scenes of ancient days, when joy and festivity reigned in the castle, when its courts resounded to the notes of mirth, and pomp and grandeur held their residence in its stately halls. But now how changed ! succeeding years had swept away its proud magnificence, and nought but nodding ruins remained, to tell the greatness of its fall. The lesson was awful and instructive, the instability of human grandeur and the narrow basis of pride, were here pointed out and fully illustrated. The sumptuous fabrick, which its proud projector vainly thought would

transmit his name to posterity, is alike subject to the vicissitudes of fortune; the casual event, assists the slowly operating hand of time to level its magnificence with the dust.

They now quitted the castle, in which the attendants saw nothing that could a moment delay their return, their minds were alone alive to superstitious horror, and they gladly obeyed the summons to depart.

The thoughts of Lord Albert as they returned to the beacon, again recurred to his friend, he felt depressed on the one hand by his disappointment; and somewhat elated on the other, that his worst apprehensions were not confirmed; the conflicting emotions tended to counterbalance each other, and lull his mind to calmness, for though the hopes of discovering his friend were fallen, yet his fears were proportionably diminished, since it seemed



seemed they had quitted a place so well adapted to execute any bloody designs.

During the remainder of the evening the peasant endeavoured to entertain his guest with all the occurrences that had taken place at the castle; amongst the rest, the particulars relating to the extirpation of the banditti.

It seems that a servant at the castle which was to be attacked, had by some means become acquainted with one of the banditti, who had contrived to draw him into a conspiracy against his master. It was agreed that he should open the gates at a certain signal, in the dead of night when all the family were at rest, and the price of his treachery was to have been one fourth of the plunder. But fortunately the conscience of the servant was not sufficiently hardened for this business—phantoms already pursued him in his dreams, and the state of his mind be-

came so dreadful, that he at length determined to divulge the whole and throw himself on the mercy of his lord.

The proper precautions were accordingly taken, and the business was to have been carried on as if it had not been made known; it was intended to get them all within the court-yard, where a sufficient number of armed men were suddenly to rush from their concealments and attack them on every side. But the complete success of their stratagem was rendered abortive by the too hasty zeal of one of the party, who seeing the captain of the banditti advance alone, had discharged and killed him; the consequences which ensued have already been related; the gentleman lost his son, and a friend who was on a visit, through their rash conduct, and the remainder of the banditti had time to effect their escape, ere they were in a condition to pursue; for quite confident of success, they had made no preparation

preparation for that; the necessity of it however was done away in another manner.

The man who had been left as a guard to Giraldu, as soon as he had effected his escape from the banditti, pursued his course to the nearest town, where he made the officers of justice acquainted with the concealed entrance into the vault, which hitherto had eluded their most diligent search, and likewise with the strength of the banditti, whose daring acts had given rise to a report, that their number was very considerable. A troop of horse were accordingly equipped, and as they hoped to surprise them, the hour of midnight was fixed as the properest time of action; they however arrived too late; the banditti had departed on their expedition, and not knowing whether they meant to return, they repaired to the beacon, leaving two of their companions

among the ruins to watch and give information, should any thing occur.

The diminished number which appeared at their return was highly favourable to their views, they immediately informed their comrades, who accordingly returned in a body to the castle. The guard acted as conductor to the trap-door, where he gave the watch-word, which he had before learned; the banditti supposing some of their party had only been wounded and were now returned, opened the trap without hesitation, but perceiving their mistake as the others descended, they immediately flew to their arms. A short but severe scuffle ensued, their party, now reduced to three capable of acting, were soon overpowered by numbers, notwithstanding the determined resolution that scorned to yield with life. The two who were before wounded appeared already nearly dead,  
and



and were therefore suffered to remain unmolested.

Lord Albert felt greatly pleased that this daring band, who had long remained the terror of the surrounding country, had been thus completely exterminated, but this pleasure soon gave way to the gloom which his disappointment had inspired. Again the kind hearted peasant endeavoured to draw him from his reverie.

"Ah sir," said he, "you used to laugh  
 "at me, when I told you the castle was  
 "haunted, but it is now very well known  
 "that the ghost of a man all in black,  
 "walks there, several people have seen it,  
 "and the doctor among the rest—may-  
 "hap you will believe him, though you  
 "will not me; for my part, after what he  
 "said, I would not go near it on any ac-  
 "count." This information more particularly struck Lord Albert, as he knew the surgeon was a man above any vulgar prejudice, he doubted not, but that he

had seen something, and was anxious to hear what; not that for a moment he yielded to the idea of a supernatural appearance, but he considered it might prove something that would assist his search.

With a view of gaining some information on this head, he took a ride on the succeeding morning to the village where the surgeon resided; he was at home, and after the first civilities, Lord Albert made him acquainted with the cause of his visit. "You already know," he replied, "that I am not one of those who are easily led to the belief of the marvellous, what I saw therefore was to me an object of surprise, rather than terror. returning from a village on the opposite side of the heath, in the evening succeeding that in which the banditti were overcome, my nearest way lay by the castle, and as those circumstances were now removed, which had hitherto rendered it unsafe, I determined to  
"examine

“ examine it more particularly than I had  
 “ ever before done. It was rather dusky  
 “ when I arrived at the gateway, and I  
 “ was about to enter, when the appear-  
 “ ance of a man within the court, caught  
 “ my attention. I immediately stopped;  
 “ he appeared habited in black, and was  
 “ leaning in a mournful attitude against  
 “ the pedestal; I stood for some minutes,  
 “ but he neither altered his position or  
 “ seemed to notice me; at length from  
 “ an opposite corner of the ruins, a man  
 “ with a dark lanthorn appeared, I ob-  
 “ served him for a short time only, before  
 “ I turned my attention to the first, but  
 “ he had disappeared in the instant, nor  
 “ could I perceive the least trace of him  
 “ afterwards. Partly concealed by a  
 “ buttress of the building, I watched the  
 “ motions of the other, without being  
 “ perceived by him; he appeared in deep  
 “ contemplation, and I thought his man-  
 “ ner betrayed a degree of fear, for he  
 “ frequently seemed to start, and stopped  
 “ to

“ to listen ; at length he entered among  
 “ the ruins, and I saw him no more.

“ I am convinced that neither of these  
 “ persons could have any connexion with  
 “ the banditti, and from thence am led to  
 “ conclude that some part of the castle  
 “ yet affords a refuge to the guilty, or un-  
 “ fortunate ; for surely some very un-  
 “ common circumstance could alone in-  
 “ duce a man to become an inmate of  
 “ such a place.”

I am of your opinion,” replied Lord  
 Albert, “ this place affords concealment  
 “ to some person, whose motives are of  
 “ no very common nature, and before I  
 “ quit this place I will make one effort  
 “ more to discover the cause. Probably  
 “ it may tend to clear up some mysteries  
 “ in which both myself and friend are  
 “ deeply concerned.”

Having thanked the doctor for his in-  
 formation



formation, he remounted his horse and returned to the beacon, from whence, accompanied by a few of his servants, he once more proceeded to the castle.

The same silence prevailed throughout the court, and no circumstance appeared that might lead to the discovery of any person concealed: Lord Albert began to think that his want of success had hitherto been owing to his having confined himself to the most accessible parts, and therefore determined to prosecute his future search in those which he had before neglected; these chiefly consisted in an upper suite of apartments, the staircase leading to which had been destroyed. But while he was contriving means to effect his purpose, his servants, into whom the peasant, in the absence of their master, had contrived to infuse some of his own superstitious fears, terrified with the expectation of some horrible conclusion to their adventure, all together requested  
that

that he would not proceed, as they were sure nothing good could live in such a place, and they had heard several people say they would not go within a mile of it upon any account.

Lord Albert ridiculed their foolish fears with some severity, but finding it had no effect upon them, he ordered them all to return to the beacon, and leave him to prosecute the search alone. Ashamed of their conduct, they now assumed some courage, and replied, that as it was his determination to stop, they would remain and die with him if necessary.

This affair adjusted, they with great difficulty ascended to the upper story; the passage through these apartments was however more difficult than they had imagined, the roof had fallen in many places, and the doors were blocked up with the rubbish. After great labour they however at length made their way through them,

them, though without meeting with any thing that might compensate for the trouble they had taken.

Returning through one of the rooms, Lord Albert took notice of a small closet in the wainscot, the fire had partly consumed the door, and as he passed he gave a slight look into it. It was nearly filled with rubbish, amongst which lay some writings on parchment; he took out the parcel, but as it seemed almost illegible, he deferred looking into it 'till his return, and desired one of his servants to take it with him.

They now descended again to the lower apartments through which they continued their researches with the strictest scrutiny, but with similar success; after having spent the greater part of the afternoon in this business, Lord Albert was at length compelled to give up his pursuit, and return to the beacon without having accomplished

accomplished the discovery he so ardently wished to make, but at the same time with a pretty strong presumption that they had been deceived in supposing it inhabited:

**CHAP.**



CHAP. IX.

When howling winds and beating rain,  
In tempests shake the sylvan cell;  
Or midst the chase on ev'ry plain,  
The tender thought on thee shall dwell.

COLLINS.

**T**HE roll of parchment which they had brought away with them, proved to be a very ancient manuscript, relative to the foundation of the castle, with several circumstances respecting the family by whom it was inhabited, but the injuries it

it had sustained from fire, and from damp, rendered it almost illegible, and a few detached sentences were scarcely sufficient to trace out the bold figurative stile of expression adopted by the writers of the time to which it belonged. Towards the conclusion it grew more perfect, and the following passage was tolerably distinct.

——“ In future times this bright, this  
 “ effulgent light, this glory of our coun-  
 “ try, shall fade away, it shall seem to  
 “ be entirely extinguished. Then shall  
 “ terror, and blood, and murder ensue ;  
 “ this castle shall mourn in ruins the fate  
 “ of her injured lord, the owl shall scream  
 “ round the desolated court, and the bat  
 “ shall find her habitation in the ruined  
 “ turret—the hospitable gate now open-  
 “ ed to the stranger and distressed, shall  
 “ then be avoided in dread and in dismay  
 “ —from these walls, whence peace and  
 “ happines are diffused, a scourge shall pro-  
 “ ceed to lay waste the surrounding coun-  
 try.

"try. Ill-fated castle, thy proud turrets  
 " must be humbled in the dust, and thy  
 " walls shall conceal the outcast of socie-  
 " ty! But as the rising sun dispels the  
 " pestilential mists from the gloomy val-  
 " ley, so shall the blaze of this returning  
 " light spread its cheering influence. All  
 " these evils shall vanish before its efful-  
 " gence—from its ashes this castle shall  
 " again arise, and succeeding ages admire  
 " the renovated splendor."

Lord Albert read this prophecy, for such  
 it appeared, with pleasure, the predicti-  
 ons seemed hastening to their accomplish-  
 ment, already part of them were fulfilled,  
 and he felt himself greatly interested in  
 the event. So deeply was his attention  
 wrapped in this discovery, that he for a  
 moment forgot the business which had  
 brought him thither, but his thoughts  
 soon returned to the affairs of his friend,  
 and his recent disappointment served but

as

as a stimulus to pursue his inquiries with undiminished assiduity.

The most probable method he could devise was to offer a reward to any person who should make a discovery of the place of his confinement, or could give any information respecting him, and he was not without hopes that some of the agents necessarily employed in this business might be tempted by the reward, to impeach their principal, and thus at once lay open the whole of this mysterious transaction. Fully satisfied with his plan, he immediately took proper measures to forward it, and resolved to await the event at least for some days, at the beacon.

During this time a circumstance had taken place at the village adjacent to the castle of the baron, which had caused some degree of amazement and terror among the inhabitants of it; the uncle of Giraldu had, in one of his evening walks



walks been seized by a party of men, and forcibly carried off, in spite of the efforts of some peasants, who were witnesses of the transaction; this had filled every breast with alarm, for though he was by no means liked in the village, yet they both expected and feared that similar attempts would be made on others.

The baron, to whom they immediately communicated this intelligence, unable to account for a procedure so strange, perplexed himself with a variety of conjectures on the cause; he had formerly entertained a suspicion that this man was somehow concerned in the seizure and detention of his nephew, he knew the malignancy of his disposition, and doubted not but that he was capable of still more, to serve any private ends he might have in view; but this new circumstance totally set aside such a supposition, since he himself now seemed another victim to the same inexplicable designs. The  
secret

secret and mysterious manner in which these schemes were executed; the total want of a clue that might direct or aid them in an attempt to discover the person or motives by which they were primarily directed; once more excited in the mind of the Baron the deepest amazement, and in increased astonishment ended every improbable conjecture.

Elvina, with a mind ever intensely bent on the fate of Giraldus, in vain traced back the circumstances of past years, to account for these singular events; she had known him almost from infancy, his visits had never been long delayed from the castle, and the whole tenor of his life seemed far different from that which would excite such determined and malignant vengeance; but to reason on facts whose causes were so deeply hidden, was useless, conjecture wearied itself in vain, and she found herself compelled to wait till time should disclose this secret train  
of

of dark transactions. She however still cherished some hopes from the expedition of Lord Albert, she knew the energy of his character, and that no probable means would be left unessayed to make the wished discovery; she therefore looked forward to the success of his endeavours with a palpitating heart, and counted the flying moments with the most anxious solicitude.

Meanwhile the reward which Lord Albert offered, had not wholly failed of the success he expected, a countryman came to the beacon on the second day, and gave information, that he had early one morning seen two men conveying away a third, such as had been described, that they were on horseback, and the arms of this person were tied behind him; from the quick rate at which they travelled, he had not time to make any further observations, but the direction they took was towards the sea, from whence they were then at

an

an inconsiderable distance; he might, he observed, have traced them further, but not having time, he followed his own road and soon lost sight of them.

This intelligence, though incomplete; afforded some rays to direct a further search, and Lord Albert immediately availed himself of it; he therefore quitted the beacon the same afternoon, and followed the directions the countryman had given him.

It grew extremely dark before they could reach the sea-side, the wind blew violently, and a heavy storm of rain fell, they sought for some cottage where they might obtain shelter for the night, but no habitation could they discover, and the tremendous beating of the surge against a rocky shore, overcame every other sound. In vain they endeavoured to screen themselves from the fury of the storm beneath the straggling trees, blasted  
by



by the keenness of the sea breeze, they were insufficient to yield a temporary shelter, and spite of the opposing elements they were compelled to proceed. They had not long continued their route before some of the party discovered they were riding close on the brink of a precipice, they immediately checked their horses, but so great was their terror, that they were incapable of communicating their discovery, before one, unconscious of the danger, rode immediately over the hanging rock; the interval which elapsed ere he reached the bottom, proved the greatness of the fall, all heard the horrid sound, and the shriek that succeeded, and all remained in dreadful expectation of a similar fate.

The most backward now alighted from their horses to search out a way to return, while the foremost, not daring to stir, since a single step might plunge them headlong down the steep, awaited in sus-

pence the most excruciating, to be relieved from their perilous situation.

At length with the greatest caution, Lord Albert and the servants who had dismounted searched the ground, and not without the most imminent danger, brought off those who were most forward, then all having alighted, they began to explore their way with slow and cautious steps, dropping with the wet that poured upon them, and chilled with the howling blast.

After travelling near an hour in this manner, totally unconscious of the road, they at length observed a glimmering light, that seemed to proceed from a place not very distant; the ground descended fast towards it, and appeared to be a kind of road, it led to a ruined building which stood close to the sea-shore. For some time no answer was made to their repeated knocking, but at length

length a high small casement was opened, and a hollow voice demanded what they wanted; Lord Albert described their situation, and begged shelter for the night. A considerable time elapsed, when the door was opened with cautious slowness, by an old man; perceiving the number of those without, he endeavoured to shut it again, but Lord Albert observing his design, instantly stepped forward into the room, and prevented him. "You must pardon this abrupt intrusion," said he, "we have been bewildered, and exposed to the storm, since the close of the evening, and have lost one of our companions among the rocks, necessity therefore, compels me to insist on staying here during the remainder of the night."

At these words the old man lost some of the trepidation which their first entrance had inspired, but still he seemed to eye them with a suspicious aspect, and

not to be much at ease in their company; but the kindness of Lord Albert, and the offer of a reward for his trouble, soon removed his remaining fears, and he informed them, that he had a place among the out-buildings where they might shelter their horses; he accordingly attended them there, brought back fresh fuel, and increased his fire, to dry their wet cloaths.

They now seated themselves in a circle round the fire, and the exhilarating blaze began to revive their drooping spirits, though they frequently talked of, and lamented the loss of their companion; the old man brought forth some coarse provisions, hunger needed few solicitations, and they all partook of the welcome repast. They were thus employed when a violent knocking was again heard at the door, the confidence of the old man began again to waver, and with marked suspicion he looked to them for an explanation: the knocking was repeated, and one



one of the men perceiving his tardiness, arose and opened the door; an exclamation of horror succeeded, and the man whose death they were just bewailing walked in.

The surprise which this appearance excited, was however quickly succeeded by joy at finding it was in reality the person whom they concluded must have been inevitably killed. He observed that his life had been preserved by keeping firmly in his seat, though the shock was so great, that he had remained for some time insensible; on recovering, he found the poor animal lying dead by his side, dreadfully shattered by the fall; for himself, a slight contusion in one of his legs was all the injury he had sustained; after calling aloud for some time he despaired of making himself heard, and explored his way along the wild beach, till the light had guided him to this mansion.

The joy of having recovered a companion whom they had deemed lost, diffused itself over the company, but Lord Albert still felt the object of his pursuit ungratified, still lamented the loss, which by his hitherto successful expedition he had hoped to repair. The old man too, seemed to labour under some oppression of mind, on which, after momentary gleams of cheerfulness, he would suddenly return to dwell; Lord Albert more than once observed it, and it excited his sympathy and compassion.

“You seem to live a very reclusive life here,” said he, “have you no family, no companion to beguile the tedious hours that are unemployed in your daily labours.” “I have one daughter,” he replied, “I had two sons, but they were lately lost at sea. I don’t know,” continued he, “whether I do right in telling you, but you seem too good to take advantage of me. About a  
“ month

" month since, a man came to inquire  
 " whether he could have my vessel for a  
 " few days, it was only to make a short  
 " voyage, and he expected it might re-  
 " turn in four days at farthest. The  
 " money he offered was considerable, and  
 " I immediately consented; my two sons  
 " were all the seamen that were to go, as  
 " he said the men he should bring with  
 " him would be sufficient to assist in  
 " steering the vessel. After we had fully  
 " agreed, he called me aside, and inform-  
 " ed me, that as the terms he offered were  
 " very great, he should expect that I  
 " would comply with all his demands. I  
 " promised I would, and he then said,  
 " there was a young man whom they  
 " should bring with them as a prisoner,  
 " they wanted to convey him to a certain  
 " place, and there to leave him, but I was  
 " to be very cautious not to mention any  
 " circumstance I might become acquaint-  
 " ed with. In an evil hour I promised all.  
 " The second morning after they brought a  
 " young

“ young man, bound, he seemed much  
 “ fatigued but said nothing ; while we  
 “ were preparing the vessel he threw him-  
 “ self on my bed and fell asleep ; poor  
 “ young man, they took and placed him  
 “ on board without his waking—my heart  
 “ relented, and I was sorry I had agreed  
 “ with them. I began to think they had  
 “ no good intentions, and I privately de-  
 “ sired my sons not to suffer them to harm  
 “ him. That night and the next day, it  
 “ blew a fearful storm, it seemed as if it  
 “ was to punish me for consenting, a  
 “ thousand times I wished I had not been  
 “ concerned, but it was too late. Since  
 “ that time,” continued the old man,  
 while the tears trickled down his cheeks,  
 “ I have heard nothing of them, no doubt  
 “ they were all lost in that storm, my  
 “ sons, my vessel, my all ; every comfort  
 “ of my old age is now gone, and the  
 “ lingering remains of my life must be  
 “ spent in wretchedness and misery, with-  
 “ out friends and without support ; ad-  
 “ ded



“ded to this, I know not what I have  
 “to fear from his relations, the sight of  
 “every stranger alarms me, and I dread  
 “being imprisoned for assisting in con-  
 “veying him away; though God knows  
 “I would have set him at liberty, had it  
 “rested with me.

During this narrative Lord Albert re-  
 mained silent; in eager impatience he  
 traced it to the fatal catastrophe, then  
 overcome with emotion, it was some time  
 ere he had power to speak. The old  
 man beheld the change in his counte-  
 nance with evident dread; he perceived  
 his own imprudence in divulging it, and,  
 dropping on his knees, solicited for mercy.

Distracted with the certain information  
 of the fate of his unfortunate friend, he  
 did not for some time observe the posi-  
 tion of the old man, 'till aroused by his  
 earnest entreaties, he bade him arise;  
 “Fear not,” said he, “I believe you are  
 “innocent

"innocent of any bad design;" then turning to his men, he ordered them to bring out the horses immediately. The night was still wet and stormy; they represented the dangers of the road, the fisherman joined their solicitations, and he at length suffered himself to be prevailed on to remain till the morning's light, and to take possession of the humble bed which the mansion afforded.

Thither he retired to indulge alone the sorrows of his heart; every hope of preserving his friend was now fled, his death he was convinced must have been inevitable, and every clue he feared was lost that could discover the author; but he vowed to himself yet, if possible, to trace him out, to execute on him that vengeance which his crimes deserved, and which friendship and gratitude equally demanded.

The long tedious night passed in alternate

nate sorrow and schemes of revenge, and when the morning's dawn first appeared, he started from his restless couch, impatient to be gone, yet dreading to communicate that intelligence to the Baron St. Austin and Elvina, which he knew must overwhelm them with affliction. At his departure the indigent state to which the poor old man was reduced by his misfortune forcibly struck him; he presented him with something that might alleviate his distress; and enable him to pursue his employment; the tears of gratitude arose in his eyes, and spoke the feelings which his tongue was incapable of expressing; Lord Albert turned hastily away, and directed his course to the castle of the Baron.

To attempt a description of the affliction which this intelligence excited would be vain and unnecessary. Elvina almost sunk under the weight, and some months

months elapsed ere she recovered a slight portion of her usual serenity, even then the melancholy air that overspread her countenance—chasing away each dimpled smile—displayed the traces of that deep affliction which oppressed her heart.



**END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.**

To attempt a description of the edition which this intelligence excited would be vain and unnecessary. Every most-sensible mind was weighty and some



